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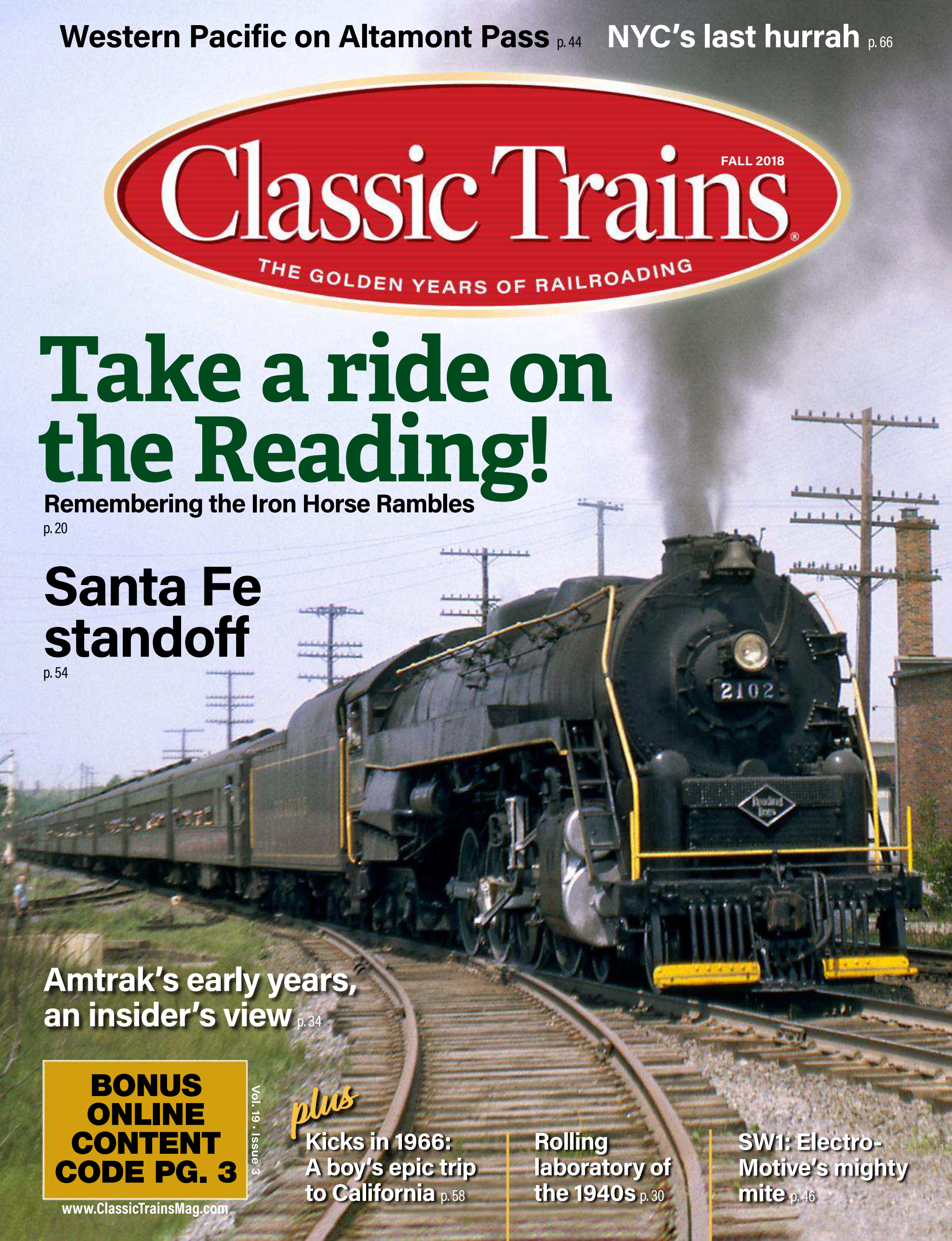
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*plus*

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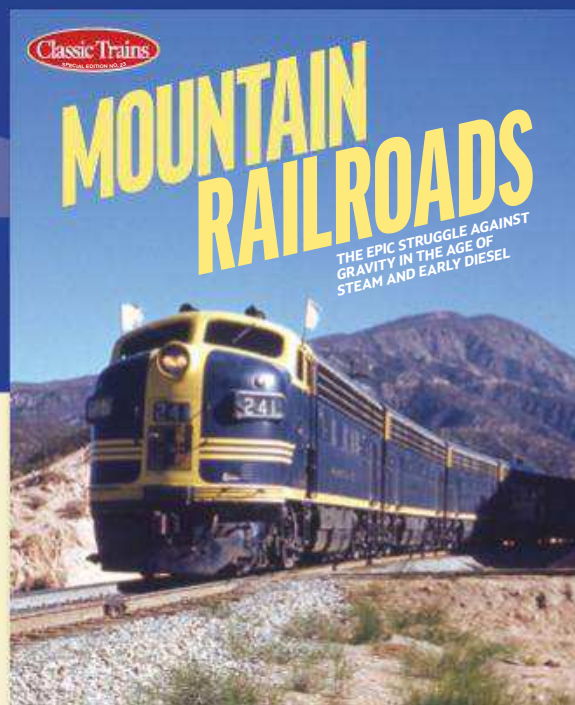
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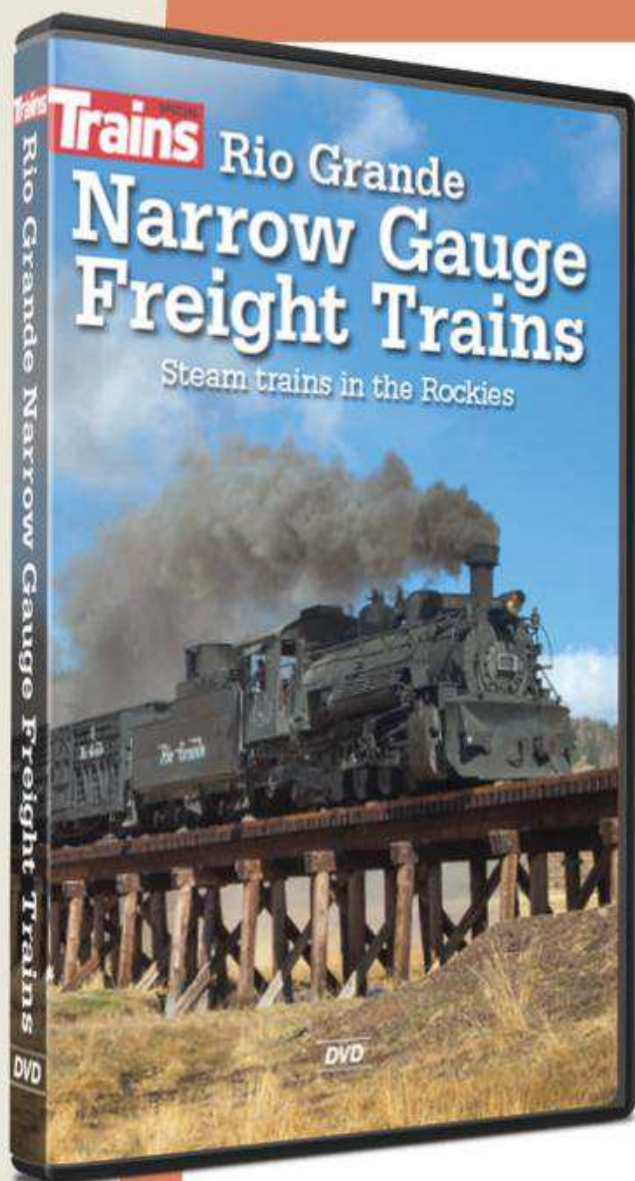
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# This Issue



**On our cover**  
Reading T-1 4-8-4 No. 2102 pulls hard departing Allentown, Pa., with an Iron Horse Ramble trip on May 20, 1962. Bob Krone

## Features

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Between 1959 and '64, surplus 4-8-4s and idle commuter coaches criss-crossed southeastern Pennsylvania on a series of remarkable excursions

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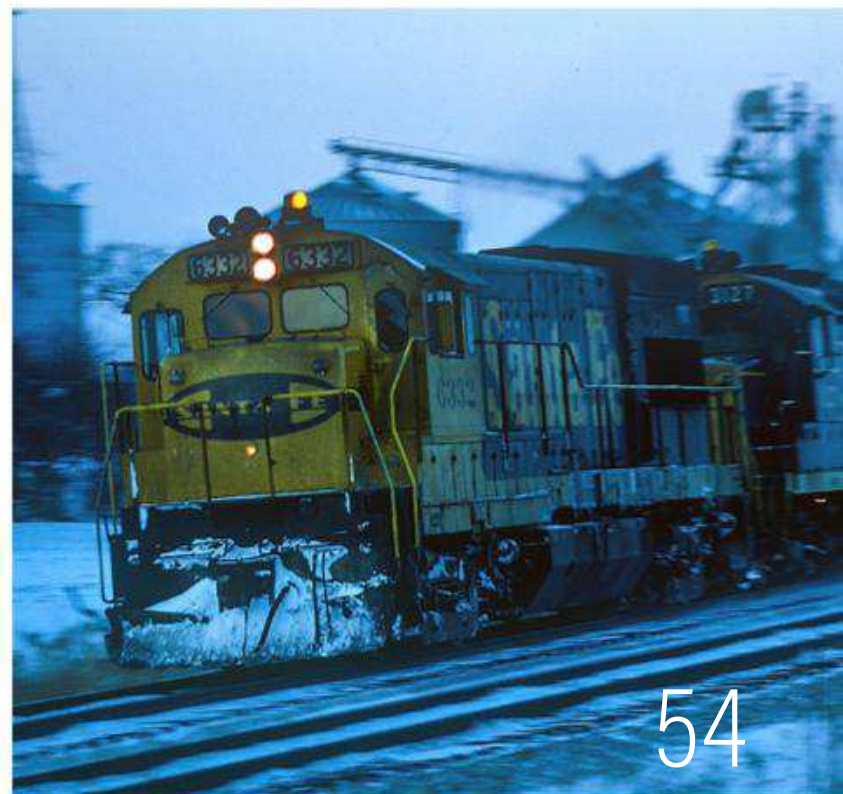
At last, working on the railroad: NYC's Hudson and Harlem divisions

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# First encounter with steam

**Those of you who grew up in the 1950s or before** might not remember the first time you saw a steam locomotive. After all, one's first encounter with something that's commonplace tends not to make an impression.

By the time I was born, steam had retreated to a few pockets of the North American railroad network. Although my life technically did overlap the steam era, I was too young to remember it, and I was nowhere near the active engines, anyway.

Which means that I was old enough, and steam was rare enough, for me to remember my first encounter. The day was June 14, 1964; the location was the Reading's Jenkintown station north of Philadelphia; and the engine was T-1 4-8-4 No. 2100, heading an Iron Horse Ramble trip to Hershey, Pa. This was around the time our family moved to nearby Elkins Park, and my dad thought his train-crazy son might like to see what he, even though not a railfan, recognized as the most compelling thing on rails.

To this day, I recall reasoning that, since we were going to a station to see a train, I would bring the station from my push-toy train set. And I also recall being more than a little intimidated by the giant 4-8-4 when my dad had me pose beside it for a photo.

This was a special event not just for me but also for the hundreds of others who came to ride and see the train, and for the railroad itself. But as Karl Zimmermann relates in his story on the Iron Horse Rambles [page 20], it was also the Reading Company simply going about its business, using its own assets for its own corporate aims. In that sense, No. 2100 on June 14, 1964, was part of the continuum that went all the way back to the 0-4-0 *Old Ironsides* of 1832. I like to think now that maybe I witnessed a bit of the steam era after all.

Robert S. McGonigal  
EDITOR



**Reading 4-8-4 No. 2100 gets ready to depart Jenkintown with an Iron Horse Ramble in June 1964. Plenty of people were on hand to see the spectacle, including me.**

Two photos, Paul J. McGonigal



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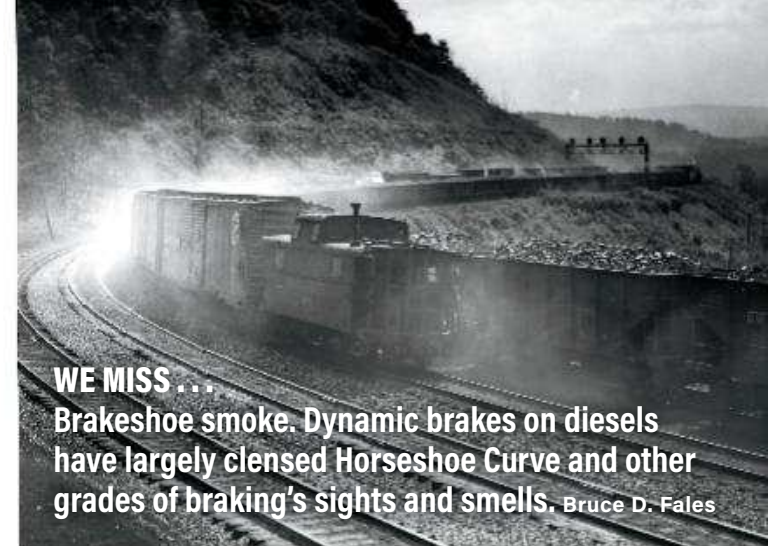
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A potpourri of railroad history, then and now

# HeadEnd

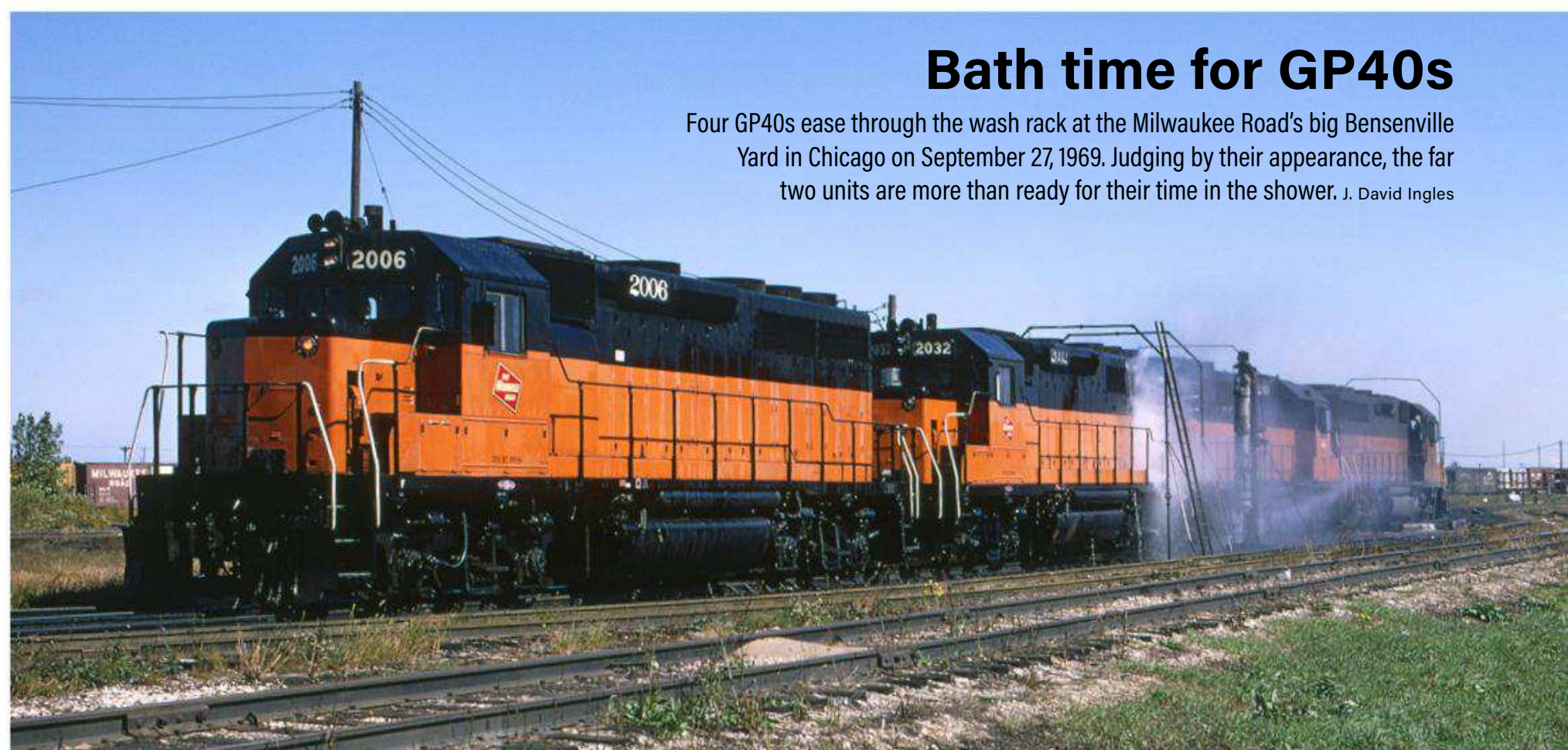


**WE MISS ...**  
Brakeshoe smoke. Dynamic brakes on diesels have largely censored Horseshoe Curve and other grades of braking's sights and smells. Bruce D. Fales



## Budd car bonanza

Canadian Pacific's 54 RDC1s, 2s, 3s, and 4s constituted the world's second-largest fleet of Budd Rail Diesel Cars (a *distant* second — Boston & Maine had twice as many). The CP deployed its Budds from coast to coast on services ranging from single-car rural accommodations to impressive commuter consists. This 11-car assemblage is eastbound train 248 approaching Montreal West station on August 15, 1974. Hugh J. Rowland



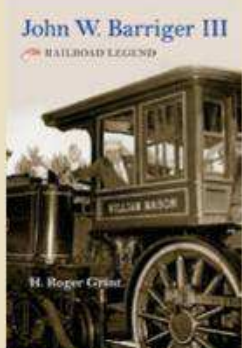
## Bath time for GP40s

Four GP40s ease through the wash rack at the Milwaukee Road's big Bensenville Yard in Chicago on September 27, 1969. Judging by their appearance, the far two units are more than ready for their time in the shower. J. David Ingles

**TRUE OR FALSE:** In the post-World War II era, most U.S. Class I rail carriers used "Railroad" as part of their official corporate name. See page 7 for the answer!



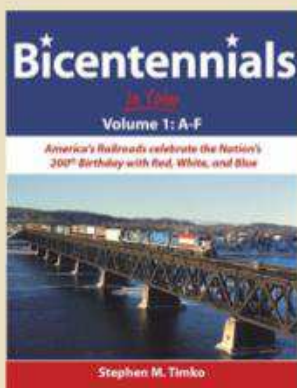
## Reviews



### John W. Barriger III: Railroad Legend

By H. Roger Grant. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind. 250 pages \$45.

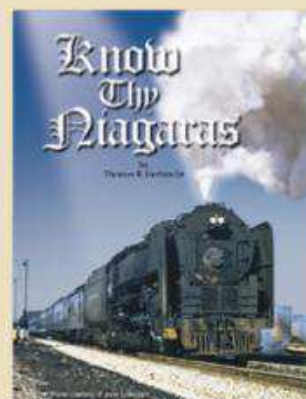
The subject of this book tops most every list of major 20th century railroad figures — and not just the alphabetical ones. "JWB" began his long rail career as a rodman for the Pennsylvania, and he held important rail-related posts in the federal government during the 1930s and '40s. Despite his tenure with such giant entities, Barriger is remembered as the "doctor of sick railroads," thanks to his leadership of several marginal, smaller carriers. He was a theoretician as well, espousing his concept of "Super Railroads." This highly readable biography, drawn from numerous sources, notably interviews with JWB's railroader son, John W. Barriger IV, paints a vivid picture of its subject's personal and professional life, not only his triumphs but also his struggles and foibles. — *Robert S. McGonigal*



### Bicentennials in Color, Vol. 1: A-F

By Stephen M. Timko, Morning Sun Books, Scotch Plains, N.J. 128 pages. \$59.95.

More than a generation has passed since America's rails were awash in red-white-and-blue "Bicen" locomotives and cars (plus at least one depot), so this series' debut so long after the fact is amazing. Coverage is thorough (81 entities in A-F, half of which are common carriers), and reproduction (315 photos) is excellent. Diesel magazine *Extra 2200 South* ran Bicen photos in the '70s, but in black-and-white. Now we'll have several hardcover volumes showing the equipment in dazzling color, so kudos to author Timko and Morning Sun for revisiting this history. One quibble: I wish *TRAINS* magazine's July 1975 gathering of seven units on Chicago's Belt Railway, pictured on pages 2 and 3, had been credited, as it added impetus to the wave. — *J. David Ingles*



### Know Thy Niagaras

By Thomas R. Gerbracht. New York Central System Hist. Soc., P.O. Box 130, Gates Mills, OH 44040. 340 pages. \$89.95.

Of all the efforts to validate steam after World War II, perhaps no railroad accomplished as much as New York Central with its magnificent Niagaras. They weren't the largest 4-8-4s; NYC's clearances required a compact machine with exceptional efficiency and mechanical integrity. NYC got all that with its 26 S-1a and S-1b engines. Like its predecessor *Know Thy Hudsons*, this huge book covers the Niagara from every angle. It is superbly illustrated not only with great action and roster photos (including 28 in color), but also rich documentary evidence, including foldout drawings, maintenance cards, company correspondence, and test reports. The author stakes a mighty big claim, that the Niagara was the "best steam locomotive ever built." He makes a great case. — *Kevin P. Keefe*

### Iron Horse Rambles

View a gallery of photos of Reading T-1 4-8-4s on the road's 1959-64 series of steam excursions.



### NYC around New York City

See photos from "Best of Everything" author Chris Burger of the Central's Hudson and Harlem lines.



### Blog

Read the weekly blog by our columnist Kevin Keefe, who reflects on the places he's been, the people he's met, and how railroading's history impacts the industry today.



### MILEPOSTS

A blog from Classic Trains columnist Kevin P. Keefe

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## Truth in mapmaking

Notice anything odd about this detail view of a post-1955 Milwaukee Road map of the U.S. rail network? All the towns along Chicago & North Western's "Cowboy Line" across northern Nebraska are just *off* the line. Moreover, the route is shown as two disconnected segments. Worse yet, Pierre, S.Dak., in reality situated on a C&NW line that paralleled MILW's to Rapid City, seemingly is a state capital with no rail service at all! Rand McNally produced this work of partial fiction — clearly with input from its client, an archrival of the North Western.

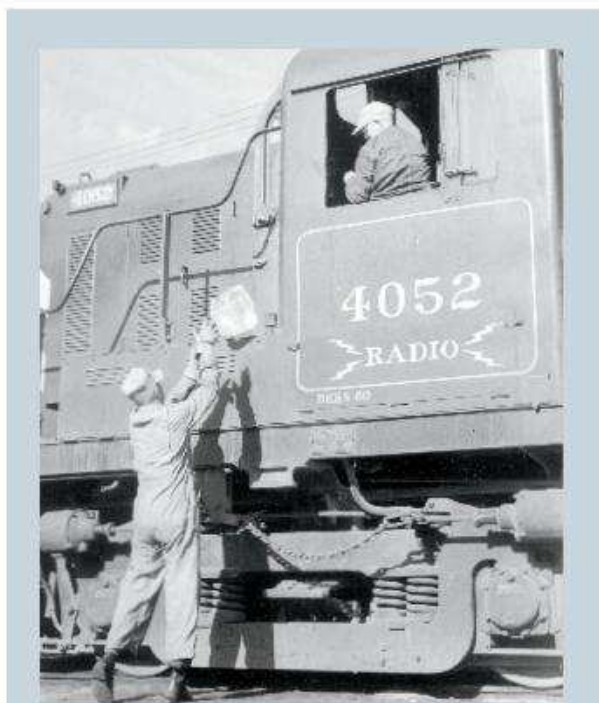






## Car carpet cleaners

The Santa Fe didn't earn its reputation for sterling passenger service by skimping on details. Here, in a special facility at the road's Chicago coach yard, workers clean and vacuum a rug removed from a passenger car. After drying, it will be reinstalled in the car. Santa Fe

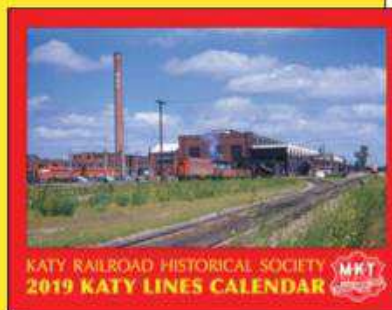


## Essential supplies

Before the current practice of stocking engine cabs with packages of bottled water, blocks of ice slaked crewmen's thirst. Easy to transport, the ice melted fast on a hot locomotive. Here a hostler at Whitehall, N.Y., tosses a block onto a Delaware & Hudson RS3 in June 1957. Jim Shaughnessy

**ANSWER** from page 5. True — but barely. Of the 134 Class I carriers in 1947, 66 used "Railroad" in their name, 63 used "Railway," and 5 used neither.

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**Back-to-back steam engines, and two yellow cabooses, show the pre-diesel Raritan River.**

Tom Donahue, John Garofalo collection

## Raritan River in steam

Seeing the tribute to the Raritan River as “True Color” [page 14] made me think how the line affected the late noted photographer Tom Donahue’s plans in the mid-1950s. Steam disappeared in 1952 on his home road, the New Haven, so he spent most of his vacation time traveling around North America to document steam before it ended. Raritan River was an early stop for him. Above is one of his slides taken before the line dieselized in 1954. He rarely labeled his slides, but this seems to be at the Sayreville Junction–South Amboy end of the railroad. — *John Garofalo, Fairfield, Conn.*

### Short lines, pro and con

Your shortline theme was a lot of fun. My favorite line was the local Ludington & Northern. It wasn’t much, just SW8 16 and some covered hoppers that took sand from Lake Michigan dunes 2 miles to the C&O, but it was ours. It ran past my junior high school and no doubt contributed to my poor grades in Algebra. It’s been gone since 1982, but I still miss it.

*Darren Struble, Ludington, Mich.*

¶ *The unit survives, in a remnant of its factory maroon and gold paint, on the tiny Kendallville (Ind.) Terminal. — J.D.I.*

I subscribed to CLASSIC TRAINS because there was a great passenger-train article a few issues ago. I’m disappointed because I can’t find much on passenger trains in the Summer 2018 issue.

*Samuel Augustus Jennings  
Washington, D.C.*

¶ *We hope this Fall issue, with four passenger-train-oriented feature stories, will be more to your liking. — R.S.M.*

Great stuff, short lines and small engines. I’d like to see this theme every year.

*Tom Burg, Merrill, Mich.*

### 70-tonner confusion

General Electric’s 70-ton locomotive held just as much fascination for me as for Russell Tedder [“Road-Switcher for the Little Guys,” page 20]. However, he did not complete the story told on page 24 about the Cooper-Bessemer FWL-6T diesel engines being sold to H. K. Porter Co. Porter produced three units powered by FWL-6Ts. The first, a 75-tonner in 1947, was a 3-foot-gauge C-C sold to U.S. Gypsum in California; it survives on the Huckleberry tourist line in Flint, Mich.

The two Porters with FWL-6T engines that looked like GE’s 70-tonner were outshopped in early 1950 for two industrial railroads in Illinois and Indiana. They were of end-cab B-B design, but weighed 80 tons. Both were gone by the early 1970s. All three had Westinghouse electrical systems.

The only U.S. customer for the C+C GE 70-tonners [page 26] was the U.S.

Potash Co., with three for its 3-foot gauge line in New Mexico. Many people often erroneously list these three as being “gypsum” related, but all three were lettered “USP” on their cabs when they were dismantled for their precious parts in Birmingham, Ala., in the mid-1970s.

The “dirty little secret” about the FWL-6T was that while it had a long original service life, 15 to 20 years with good maintenance, it was expensive to completely rebuild by the end of the ’70s. Cooper Industries, of Grove City, Pa., had become proud of its prices for FWL-6T parts by then, though there was no shortage of getting such parts from them.

*Thomas Lawson Jr., Vestavia Hills, Ala.*

In regard to the photo on page 28 of two SP 70-tonners on subsidiary San Diego & Arizona Eastern, trailing unit 5119 survives on her original home rails, at the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum in Campo, Calif. This is at mileage 66, although 5119 probably never worked that far out of San Diego.

*Jim Baker, San Diego, Calif.*

### Magma’s real last steam day

In the Epilogue to his wonderful “The Almost Last Day of Steam” [page 32], David Bell says he visited the Magma Arizona on July 21, 1968, but then says “13 days after our visit” steam ended, on September 3. Something doesn’t add up here.

*Gerhart Karg, Riverdale, N.J.*

¶ *Bell caught his own error, too late to correct it, but we editors dropped the ball, too. The September 3 date was correct. — J.D.I.*

Bell’s story brought back memories of the February 1960 day when my college roommate, Greg Smith, and I spent the day photographing the Magma Arizona. The train either doubled or tripled the hill, I can’t remember which, and when 2-8-0 No. 5 tackled the hill for the last time, at a pace between a fast walk and a slow run, it passed us just as a Cub Scout meeting across the street let out. Immediately a whole pack of young boys galloped after No. 5, easily overtaking her. As they closed in, the hogger brushed them back with two short, sharp blasts from the blowdown valve. Boy, did they scatter!

I also liked your “Bumping Post,” the atmospheric photos on page 107 of the Yosemite Valley’s terminal at El Portal.

*Fletcher Coolidge, Northfield, Minn.*



## Mogul moved, now exposed

Regarding Jerry Pinkepank's "What's in a Photo?" entry on northern Lower Michigan's East Jordan & Southern [page 40], I have a somewhat disturbing update on preserved 2-6-0 No. 6. In 2017, she was moved from her longtime protected location cited in Note 1 to Sportsman's Club Park, on the west side of the Jordan River, so she is no longer protected from the weather and vandals. I fear she may become scrap fodder for the East Jordan Foundry. She was moved to "make the town and South Arm of Lake Charlevoix more of a tourist destination," it was said. East Jordan Foundry will be moving to a new plant 15 miles east in Elmira, Mich.

*Jim Evans, Central Lake, Mich.*

## Wrong end in Montana

Nice job with all the shortline stories, with a broad sampling of coverage. Regarding the Montana Western photo on page 53, the location is on the northwest side of Valier, and the train is not at Conrad but bound there. The spot is identifiable by both the 56-lb. rails, a mid-1909 relay of Krupp rails rolled ca. 1880 for Great Northern predecessor St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba, as well as the 25kV Conrad-Valier power line poles in the background at right, installed along MW's line ca. 1929.

The pictured "1955 Whitcomb 100" was an 80-ton center-cab built in Bald-



## WAG in Alberta

I noted the Wellsville, Addison & Galetton photos on page 58. To show you how far afield the "WAG's" famous "Sole Leather Line" boxcars got, consider this 1972 photo above, of one at Youngstown, Alberta, on Canadian National. Canada must've had a real shortage of boxcars then, because I found two WAG cars among other U.S. cars. Apparently WAG also made some car-hire revenue.

*Chuck Bohi, White River Junction, Vt.*

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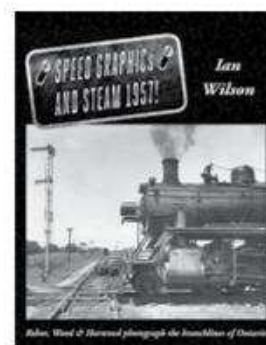
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## End of the line, 976 miles from North Vancouver

I enjoyed Don Evans' "Fallen Flags Remembered" entry [page 16] on the Pacific Great Eastern/British Columbia Railway/BC Rail. In 2001, I rode what was advertised as the last RDC run to the end of the line at Fort Nelson. We went about 2 miles north of there, just before what I recall was a 100-foot drop-off, and detrained for this group photo. Note the 100 FT TO END OF TRACK sign at the right. — *Charles H. Bogart, Frankfort, Ky.*

win-Lima-Hamilton's Eddystone (Pa.) plant, where all Whitcomb locomotives, formerly outshopped in Rochelle, Ill., were built after 1952. This unit went to GN's Havre shop to have its cylinder liners replaced in summer 1959, and a leased GE 132-ton center-cab substituted. It was built as Ford 1005 in 1940 and looked identical to the WAG 1800, ex-Ford 1002, pictured on page 58, except that it still had a large blue Ford "oval" on the cab!

*Art Jacobsen, Great Falls, Mont.*

## The O&M? Wonder no more

Thanks to Doug Leffler for his informative "The Obscure Ohio & Morenci" [page 60]. Ever since I noticed its dashed and solid lines in Volume 3 of Richard Carpenter's *Railroad Atlas of the U.S. in 1946*, I had wondered what was there and if I crossed it driving on I-80/90 on my annual trip to and from the Chicago area. Now I know, and I'll keep looking.

*Mike Schleigh, Grove City, Pa.*

## L&N tribute, 76 years later?

I have traveled to Kentucky's Natural Bridge State Park many times, and so read Denny Hamilton's story ["Dad's Vacation Train," page 97 in "The Way It Was"] with interest. The L&N right of way hereabouts is still visible in many places even though the line was aban-

doned in 1942. A few miles west of the bridge itself along Highway 11 is an odd sight — a lone crossbuck by the right of way in the middle of a field! It looks to be a modern metal one, but I like to think it's waiting for an L&N 4-6-0 to steam by.

*Dave Michaels, Cincinnati, Ohio*

## CNJ diesels get the vote

I can understand Bennett Levin's "Missed Opportunity" choice [page 98, in "The Way It Was"] of a Jersey Central diesel rather than an old Pennsy K4. In the early 1950s I was a Cub Scout in Leonardo, N.J., on CNJ's Matawan-Highlands branch, and one day CNJ ran a special for Scouts to tour its Elizabethport shops. We were boarding in Red Bank when someone yelled, "We got a diesel." Now, *that* was a big deal! Soon all trains we saw were diesel-powered, but a year or so later, a friend came running up to our home to say a steam train was coming! Sure enough, here came a Camelback with an excursion. Now, that was a *really* big deal. I looked up the date, which was July 11, 1954, with engine 774.

*Peter Komelski, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.*

## A "just miss" on steam?

Frank Tatnall probably just missed seeing Birmingham & Southeastern's most well-known steam locomotive when

he visited in 1964 ["Southern Hospitality," page 64]. B&S 2-8-0 200 was built by Alco's Cooke Works in 1923 and bought by the road in 1926. It worked until the early 1950s, and in 1963 was bought by New York rail preservationist and book publisher Stephen D. Bogen, and brought north. Renumbered 97, the 2-8-0 hauled excursions on Vermont Railway and the New Haven in Connecticut before finding a home on the new Valley Railroad at Essex, Conn., where she's been a mainstay since 1973; she is currently undergoing work to return to service.

*Scott A. Hartley, Broad Brook, Conn.*

## "Skinny Atlas" connections

I've subscribed to CLASSIC TRAINS from the start (and TRAINS since 1980), and there's nothing like a picture or reminiscence in your pages to bring the past alive — especially when you share the experience directly. Such is the case twice in Dave Ingles' "Empire State Variety" [page 42]. Living in suburban Minneapolis, my ears always resonate when Fred Child plays something from the music festival at "Skinnyapolis in the Finger Lakes Region of New York State" on his *Performance Today* radio show. No doubt I'm hearing him incorrectly. Now thanks to Dave's story, I know that Skaneateles holds railroad as well as musical interest.

I grew up east of Cleveland in Willowick, Ohio, less than a mile from the side-by-side former NYC Water Level Route and Nickel Plate main lines. Perusing our Lake County road atlas in the early 1980s, I spotted the Fairport, Painesville & Eastern. Intrigued but not knowing if it still existed, let alone what it might operate, I hopped on my bike one summer day to try to find it.

Not long after I got trackside, I heard a horn. I started to look for its source (it could've been on Conrail), but I returned to the crossing in time to see FP&E 108 and a mate with a short train. This was my only encounter with the FP&E, and it's these chance serendipities that make railroads such a fulfilling interest.

*Brian Prokop, Plymouth, Minn.*

I chuckled about the Skaneateles Short Line folks hauling their 44-tonner out of the shed with the 45-tonner so Dave and his friends could get photos. They did the same for me, but the opposite, as when I visited, SSL was using the 44-tonner and hauled the 45-tonner out for me.

*Doug Leffler, Jackson, Mich.*





Former GM Russian Decapod 206 wears her previous owner's initials and number — SAL 544 — today at the museum in Spencer, N.C.

Jim Wrinn

## Gainesville Midland sanding

Gainesville Midland 2-10-0 206, pictured on page 54, is not being sanded at Clarksboro, Ga., as stated in the caption, for GM's only such facility was at Belmont, about 10 miles south of Gainesville. Today the 2-10-0, lettered as Seaboard 544, is at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer.

Robert H. Hanson, Loganville, Ga.

## Riding the Mobile & Gulf

I enjoyed Karl Zimmermann's "Last Steam Standing" on the Mobile & Gulf [page 66]. I visited twice, once in 1968 and again a year or two later, both arranged by the Heart of Dixie club (Birmingham's chapter of NRHS). We gained permission to ride to Buhl and back, most of us in a gondola with one or two (including Tom Lawson) in the engine.

John B. Degges, Salt Lake City, Utah

## Foxboro vs. East Foxboro

Chris Burger's "Best of Everything" entry, "Good Years in Providence" [page 90], hit home. As a second-generation New Haven employee I could add a lot to Chris's photo captions, but I do feel it necessary to correct a detail on his mention of mainline local station stops on page 92.

He stated the train stopped at Foxboro, but the mainline stop was East Foxboro (the Foxboro station was on the Mansfield-Framingham branch). My father, a New Haven official, commuted to Boston from East Foxboro for many years, as I would also do later. In the 1970s the town of Foxboro refused to pay its share for MBTA service when such was first assessed, and the station was closed. Most patrons could reach the nearby Mansfield and Sharon stations with little trouble.

Bruce K. Heald, Lancaster, Pa. 1

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# When steam rocked the stereo

A new CD of locomotive sounds recalls the heyday of railroad-sound LPs



A lanky Union Pacific 4-12-2 sings its distinctive three-cylinder song as it hustles a freight west through a Nebraska town in the early 1950s.

Linn H. Westcott

**The little stereo in the corner of my parents' living room** was what an audio-ophile would call extremely low end, just a simple turntable married to a pair of cheap speakers.

But, oh, what wonders it could reproduce! Especially when I curled up on the floor in front of it one evening in late 1964. I was 13, and my favorite Christmas gift that year was a so-called deluxe record album, an "LP" in Sixties parlance, given to me by my aunt and uncle in Philadelphia.

Where they lived was important. What came out of those speakers wasn't music — it was the mesmerizing sounds of Pennsylvania Railroad steam locomotives, a boxed set of an LP and an illustrated 16-page booklet, produced by Ralbar Productions in cooperation with the railroad. My relatives in Philly knew I loved trains, and were feeding what at the time was my obsession with all things PRR.

The first thing I heard wasn't a train at all. It was a welcome message from PRR President Allen J. Greenough, whom this kid decided must be a great guy simply

because he led the Standard Railroad of the World. Sitting there on the carpet, I thought he was speaking directly to me.

What came next was a revelation: 12 tracks (they called them "bands"), featuring the sounds of most of Pennsy's best-remembered engines. I heard K4s Pacifics roaring along the New York & Long Branch in September 1955, their melodious whistles belying the fact they'd been relegated to commuter service. I heard a magnificent M1 4-8-2, recorded while it was being paced along the storied Middle Division at Duncannon in October 1953; its exhaust was slightly out of square. I heard the electrifying high-pitch "banshee" whistle of an H9s 2-8-0 running light near Tyrone in August 1952. There was more, including a compilation of action on Horseshoe Curve that included a mighty J1 2-10-4.

What sparked this memory was the recent arrival of a fine new CD called *Steam Echoes II*, from the Southern California Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society. I corresponded with its producer, photographer Stan Kistler,

and discovered the recording has an interesting history. Parts of it were included on an LP produced in 1958 by the chapter. Most of the tracks were recorded by Ed Ripley, at the time the director of the chapter and a great-grandson of legendary Santa Fe President E. P. Ripley.

"After the first pressing ran out of stock, they never re-released it," Stan told me. "Then LPs went out of style, the chapter kept the master tapes, and many more were stored for years. I suggested to their current board that I could re-master them into CD format, and that's what brought about *Steam Echoes II*."

The board was wise to listen to Stan, because this CD is loaded with wonderful sonic moments. The 12 tracks cover a wide range of western steam railroading, from UP Big Boys and 800-class 4-8-4s in Nebraska and Wyoming to a variety of SP power in Southern California and the Bay Area to a rare treat in Chama, N.Mex., where we hear D&RGW narrow-gauge 2-8-2s muscling a trainload of oil pipeline sections out of the yard in 1957.

Several performances really caught my





ear. I was charmed by the artful whistling of the engineers on various SP San Francisco-area commute and passenger trains, emanating from Mt-class 4-8-2s and GS-class *Daylight* 4-8-4s; the occasional *blaaatt!* from a 4-8-4's air horn takes some getting used to. There was also an old SP 2-8-0 working a local freight in the San Joaquin Valley.

Most intriguing was the sound of the exhaust from UP 4-12-2 No. 9000 and SP 4-10-2 No. 5021, both of which now reside at the chapter's RailGiants Museum in Pomona, Calif. There's no mistaking the pulsating, almost syncopated exhaust of these three-cylinder locomotives, performing in what sounds like a jazzy

6/8 time signature.

Listening to *Steam Echoes II* got me thinking about all the railroad recordings I've enjoyed over the years, many of them from the late 1950s and early '60s, the golden age of the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  album and the big home hi-fi. Some have become classics.

A favorite was *Detroit Division*, a 1960 selection of Grand Trunk Western steam out of Detroit ["America's Last Real Steam Show," Spring '18 CT]. Art Weber's microphones really captured the bitter-sweet years when GTW mounted a "last stand" with Pacifics and 4-8-4s tearing through suburban Royal Oak and Birmingham. Another one I loved worked the other side of the motive-power aisle: 1963's *Mr. D's Machine*, in which producer Brad Miller proved that a battery of all kinds of SP diesels could be almost as dramatic as steam. Almost.

Then there was the *Sgt. Pepper* of all steam recordings, O. Winston Link's magisterial *Sounds of Steam Railroading*, a series of albums showcasing steam on the Norfolk & Western. Link recorded the Big Three of N&W, the streamlined

J-class 4-8-4, the versatile A-class 2-6-6-4, and the gutty Y6b 2-8-8-2, but he also made memorable tapes of squat 4-8-0s on the fabled Abingdon Branch.

Link really outdid himself with two in particular. On *2nd Pigeon and the Mocking Bird*, a recording of Y6's on mine runs, he turned me and many others into fans of the N&W hooter whistle. And on *The Fading Giant* was his Christmas Eve recording of a J stopping with the *Pelican* in Rural Retreat, Va., serenaded by a church carillon. At my house, this haunting slice of railroad life is as much a part of the season as the movie *White Christmas*.

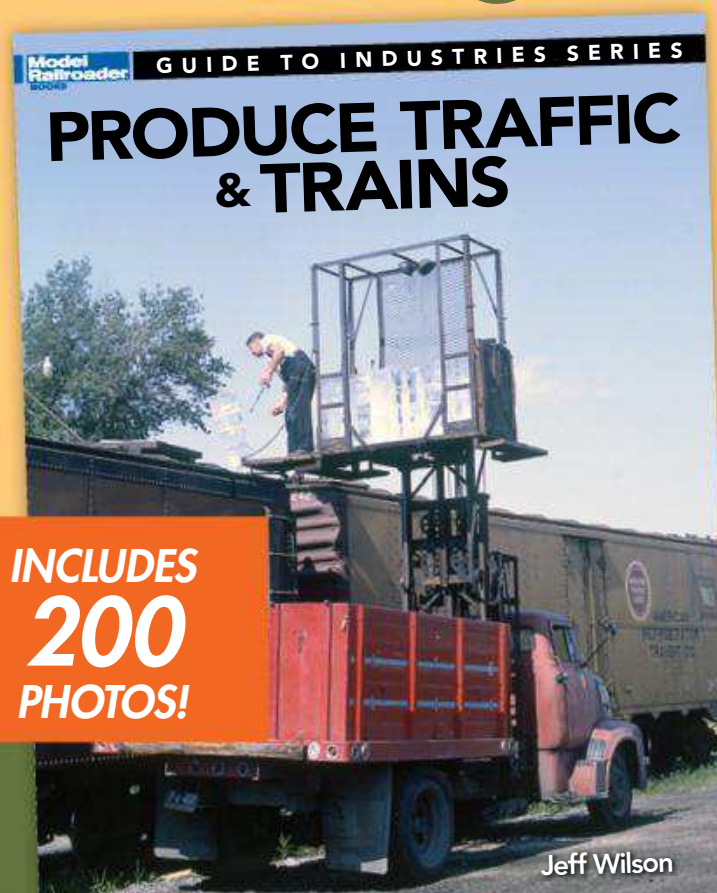
So thanks, Stan Kistler and the Southern California Chapter, for rekindling a love affair. I'm not curling up on the floor anymore, but in the wee hours, you've got me listening to the magic of steam again. **L**

KEVIN P. KEEFE joined the *TRAINS* staff in 1987, became Editor in 1992, and retired in 2016 as Kalmbach Publishing Co.'s vice president, editorial. His weekly blog "Mileposts" is at [ClassicTrainsMag.com](http://ClassicTrainsMag.com).



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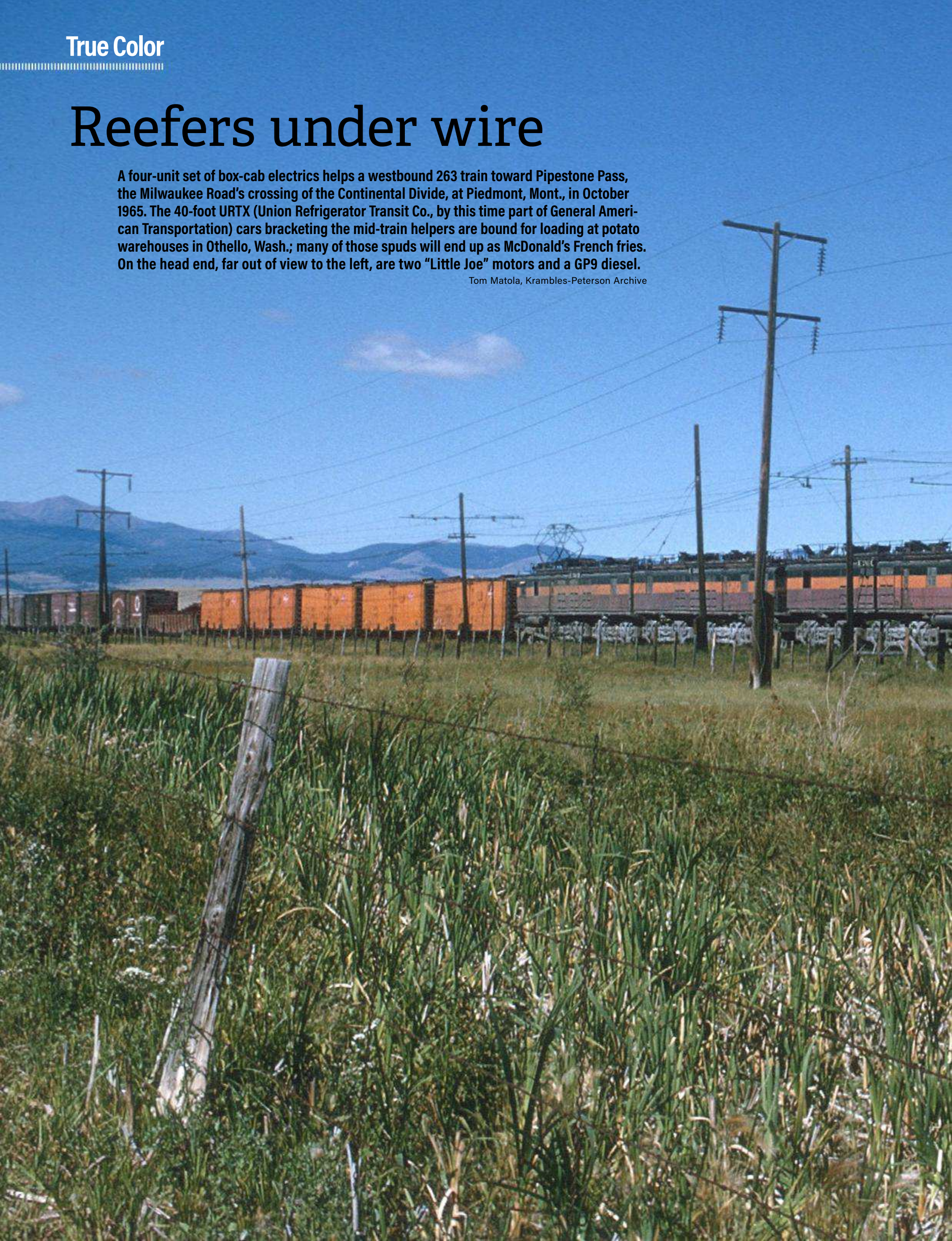
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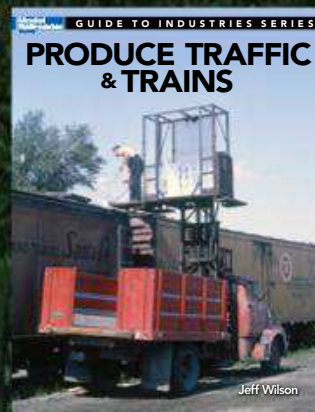
# Reefers under wire

**A four-unit set of box-cab electrics helps a westbound 263 train toward Pipestone Pass, the Milwaukee Road's crossing of the Continental Divide, at Piedmont, Mont., in October 1965. The 40-foot URTX (Union Refrigerator Transit Co., by this time part of General American Transportation) cars bracketing the mid-train helpers are bound for loading at potato warehouses in Othello, Wash.; many of those spuds will end up as McDonald's French fries. On the head end, far out of view to the left, are two "Little Joe" motors and a GP9 diesel.**

Tom Matola, Krambles-Peterson Archive







There's more about refrigerator cars and their precious cargoes in the new book *Produce Traffic & Trains*, available at [KalmbachHobbyStore.com](http://KalmbachHobbyStore.com)



# “The J” returns to its origins

Elgin, Joliet & Eastern went from belt line to steel-hauler and back again

BY MICHAEL W. BLASZAK



Wearing the modern “J-ball” nose logo, SD38-2s 662 and 665 wheel the “Line Train” west toward Joliet at Matteson, Ill., on February 20, 1995.

Michael W. Blaszak

**If you wanted to accomplish something in railroading** during the Gilded Age, it helped to have the house of J. Pierpont Morgan behind you. Chicagoan Philip B. Shumway learned this in 1887. He had invested in the Joliet, Aurora & Northern, proposed to run between those two Illinois towns, with the idea of it becoming a belt line encircling the increasingly congested Chicago terminal. He found financing to finish the 22-mile pike in 1886, but JA&N had sparse traffic and the lender refused to fund the belt line.

Shumway turned to Drexel, Morgan & Co. and received the opposite reception. The House of Morgan took over JA&N, creating the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway (commonly, “the J”) on March 18, 1887, and hiring Shumway to build out his dream. Sadly, Shumway suffered a stroke on May 9 and expired a week later. EJ&E, determined to press on, engaged contractor F. E. Worcester of New York.

EJ&E began acquiring right of way for three lines: north from Normantown to Spaulding, east of Elgin, to connect with the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul; from Joliet east to tap Eastern trunk lines in Indiana; and a branch south from Plainfield to reach coal deposits southwest of Joliet. The new system was finished from

Spaulding to McCool, Ind., on the Baltimore & Ohio, by November 1888. Bridging the Illinois River was an obstacle for the coal branch, but it was also complete by that date, an important milestone for the fledgling EJ&E as the “St. Paul” was eager to get Illinois coal for its locomotives. Soon 40 carloads of coal a day to Spaulding were filling the J’s coffers.

Alex Leith, a Joliet Iron & Steel official, advocated extending the EJ&E from Spaulding east to Waukegan, on Lake Michigan, where the J could get iron ore from lakeboats. Its completion by J subsidiary Waukegan & Southwestern in 1890 touched off a Waukegan-area land rush, creating a strong traffic base.

Experienced railroad executive Samuel Spencer became EJ&E’s president as 1889 began. His primary role was to convince the trunk lines to use the J. It wasn’t an easy sell, as the big roads all had existing, if overloaded, Chicago facilities for interchange, and they would have to cede some control over the traffic to the new “Chicago Outer Belt Line.” But Spencer was persistent and persuasive, and by 1892 the J was moving more interchange carloads than coal. After extending east to Porter, Ind., and a connection with the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern (New

York Central) in 1893, the J began turning an operating profit the following year.

In 1894 the J extended to port facilities in South Chicago via trackage rights. Another potential revenue source was the burgeoning Standard Oil of Indiana refinery in Whiting, which got crude oil by rail and refined it into kerosene and, increasingly, gasoline. EJ&E bought a short line in Hammond, the Western Indiana, and extended it to Whiting in 1897.

Before leaving EJ&E in 1899, Spencer had built it into a 120-mile steel semicircle around Chicago, fulfilling Shumway’s vision and growing its traffic to four



Roof details on EMD-engined “SW2400” (as some fans called J’s rebuilt Baldwin center-cabs) 925 are evident at Brisbane, Ill., in 1965.

John S. Ingles





Prototype 2,000 h.p. Baldwin diesel 100 (left center) and stored Alco switchers are among sights seen from Kirk Yard's hump tower in June 1960.

J. David Ingles

times the 1889 level. The next expansion would solidify the J's symbiotic relationship with the area's steel industry.

## Steel giants are created

In 1865 the North Chicago Rolling Mill shipped the first steel rails rolled in America. Stronger and more durable than iron, steel soon became the preferred choice, leading to more new steel mills in the Chicago area, including the Joliet Iron & Steel works. Beginning in 1880, the South Works mill filled 440 acres on Chicago's southeastern lakefront. In 1889 the latter two mills and three others in the Chicago and Milwaukee areas merged to form Illinois Steel, the world's largest steel firm at the time.

Each of Illinois Steel's facilities set up a subsidiary railroad for plant switching and interchange. The largest was the Chicago & Blue Island, which served South Works. Illinois Steel planned to extend C&BI to Joliet, but C&BI got trackage rights over the Rock Island and EJ&E instead. Another major trackage-rights agreement, in 1893, gave C&BI the right to run trains south over the Chicago & Eastern Illinois to access C&EI-served coal and limestone mines, and by 1894 C&BI (and later, EJ&E) engines and

crews were seen around Danville, Ill.

Expansion eastward began in 1894 as well, as C&BI built a bridge over the Calumet River and laid track to the Indiana state line. The Chicago, Lake Shore & Eastern was incorporated in 1895 to build a 10.5-mile line to the LS&MS and B&O at Pine Junction. CLS&E began operating the other Illinois Steel roads in 1896, boasting a total of 366 route-miles, mostly on trackage rights.

Elbert H. Gary, general counsel of Illinois Steel, watched closely as Andrew

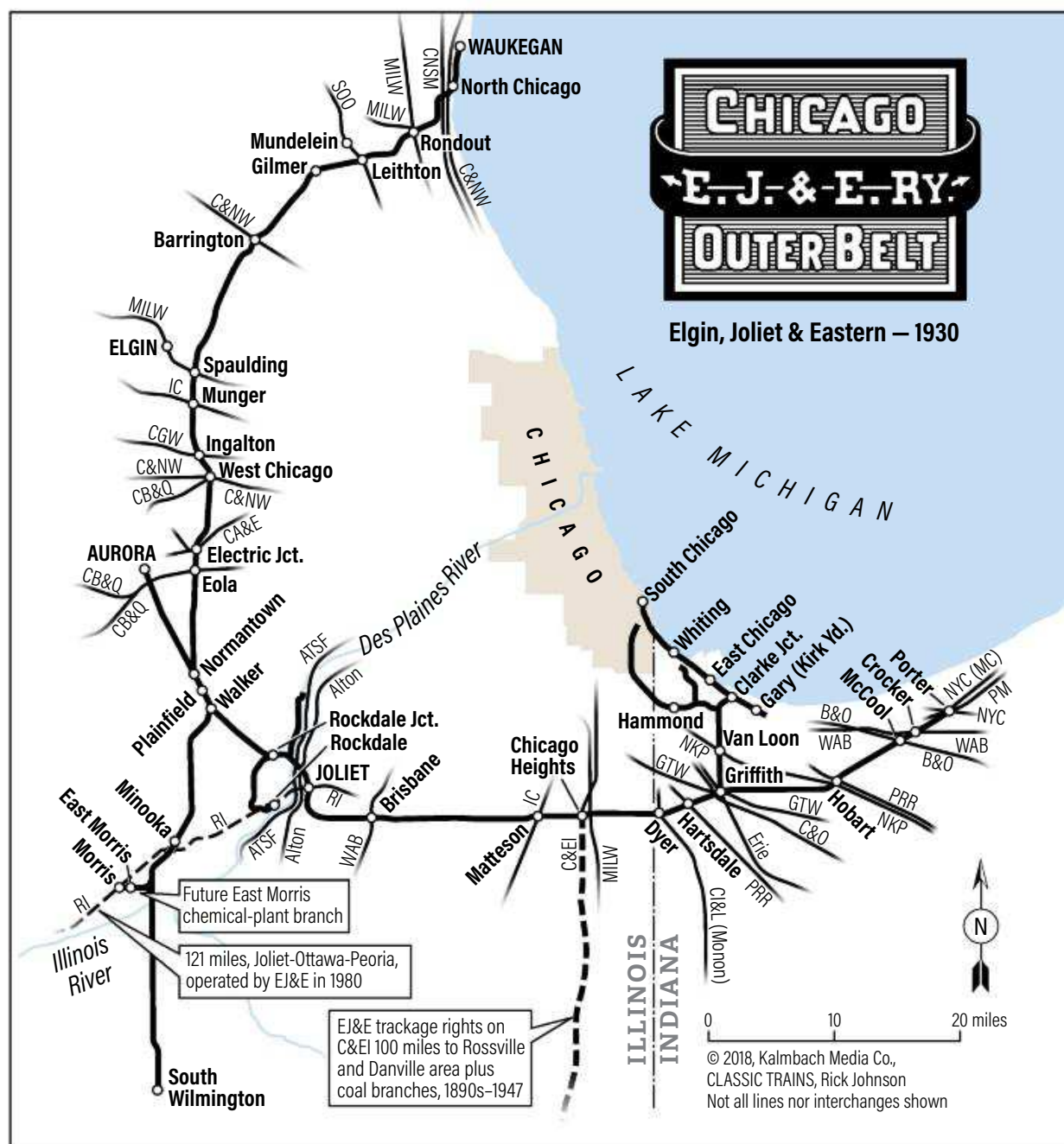
Carnegie's competing Pittsburgh-area mills bought mines, railroads, and end-product producers, and became convinced his firm needed to do the same. One target was the EJ&E, which hosted CLS&E coal trains between Hartsdale, Ind., and the C&EI at Chicago Heights, Ill. EJ&E also served the Waukegan works of American Steel & Wire, an Illinois Steel affiliate. Perhaps most importantly, the J was owned by the House of Morgan, which was advising Illinois Steel.

In 1898, ownership of Illinois Steel,



Mikado 727 runs "caboose light" by the West Chicago tower (still staffed today) at C&NW's "Overland Route" mainline diamonds in 1945.

Henry J. McCord





# Fallen Flags Remembered



On June 6, 1987, minimally decorated SD38-2 660 (left) sails south over the new Chicago Central & Pacific's ex-IC Iowa Division at Munger, Ill., today an important CN-to-CN connection. Sibling 663 (right) works at the large and lucrative East Morris chemical complex January 6, 1986.

Both photos, Michael W. Blaszak

the Minnesota Iron Co. (which mined ore in the Vermilion Range), and EJ&E was transferred to Federal Steel Co., a new entity led by Gary. With EJ&E and CLS&E under common ownership, a physical link between them became a priority. To do this, Griffith & Northern, a J subsidiary, built from Griffith to Clarke Junction, then expanded to reach the former Western Indiana and the Whiting oil refinery, all in 1900. EJ&E leased and began operating CLS&E in 1909.

Meanwhile, Carnegie had decided to retire from business to concentrate on philanthropy. Morgan admired the Carnegie companies' efficient production and anticipated considerable savings in combining those firms with Federal Steel. Carnegie agreed to sell, and on March 2, 1901, his companies joined Federal Steel under the banner of United States Steel Corp. (USS), of which EJ&E and several other railroads became subsidiaries.

Demand for steel continued to climb, and U.S. Steel, led by Gary, decided to build a new mill on lakefront sand dunes at Lake Michigan's southern tip. Construction began in 1906, and CLS&E extended its lakefront line east to the site, named Gary, the following year. The yard built there was named after John Kirk, CLS&E's first superintendent at the site.



"Pie wagon" 211, a 660 h.p. 1940 Alco and one of four EJ&E "high-hoods," wears "road colors" at the Waukegan roundhouse in 1960.

Ed Spitzer, J. David Ingles collection

By 1909 the Gary Works, next to the new townsite of Gary, was shipping steel over EJ&E to the trunk lines serving Chicago.

Steel traffic made EJ&E a prosperous carrier, and in 1920 the J generated 36.1 million tons of revenue freight. After a dip in the early 1920s, traffic increased to 39.8 million tons in 1929. The J's operating ratio hovered in the 65 percent range during that decade, generating about \$2 million in annual profit for U.S. Steel.

One source of business the J didn't pursue was passengers. The Joliet, Plainfield & Aurora interurban, opened in 1904, provided frequent service and won the U.S. mail contract from the J in 1905, so EJ&E discontinued its Aurora trains. Service over the main line was converted to passengers-in-caboose mixed trains, and this arrangement provided an unusual "rare-mileage" opportunity for intrepid railfans into the 1960s.

## Early dieselization

EJ&E's steam roster was dominated by low-wheeled engines suited to starting heavy trains of coal, steel, and interchange traffic. In due time, 4-4-0s and Ten-Wheelers gave way to 102 Consolidations, which were supplanted by Mikados beginning in 1913. The 75 2-8-2s ordered from the builders were augmented by five from Western Pacific.

The Depression severely pinched EJ&E's revenues and caused permanent cutbacks in U.S. Steel operations. Further, the mines on the Illinois River branch played out, although today that branch enjoys a recent new role, serving from a westward EJ&E spur several chemical plants at East Morris. CSX, operator of the old Rock Island main line there, also serves them.

Trackage-rights loads on C&EI dwindled as well, and that operation ended in

1947. (Remarkably, the skeleton of EJ&E's steam roundhouse just south of Rossville, Ill., still stands on the west side of CSX's former C&EI main line.)

EJ&E attacked its cost structure by turning to diesels, for which its intensive plant switching operations were well suited. The J first got four SW units from EMC in 1936, and then additional SWs, Alcos (including high-hood models nicknamed by some as "pie wagons") and Baldwins during World War II. The 77-unit fleet displaced 105 steam switchers and helped manage wartime traffic peaks.

Mainline trains were still the province of the aging Mikados after the war, and although the J wanted to replace them, it wasn't convinced the builders' streamlined cab units were the right solution. The J, which briefly did have one four-unit set of Baldwin "Sharknoses," drew up plans for a powerful twin-engine center-cab locomotive — basically two switchers on one frame — and contracted with Baldwin for a prototype in 1946. The six-motor, 2,000 h.p. "Golden Goose," No. 100 (actually solid orange), could pull twice as much tonnage up the J's steepest grade as a 2-8-2, so 25 near-copies were ordered in 1947, and EJ&E also bought a Baldwin demonstrator, which became 126. These 27 big units and 10 Alco RS2s ended the steam era on the J in 1949.

## The final decades

The years after the prosperous 1950s proved more challenging. Many Class I connections had built their own Chicago hump yards, making it easier to interchange directly with each other. Truck competition also began eroding carloadings. Most importantly, U.S. Steel and other firms began cutting back in reaction to lower-cost imports and the transition to smaller, lighter automobiles as oil





**EJ&E did have "traditional" depots, and three survive. Plainfield's, later moved to along the East Morris branch and preserved, is passed by northbound caboose 522 in August 1986.**

Michael W. Blaszak

prices rose. Joliet Works and the Waukegan wire mill shut down in the 1970s, and South Works closed in 1992. In 1986 the Gary Works suffered a long, debilitating strike, pushing the J into the red.

To offset steel's decline, EJ&E secured unit coal-train traffic to its on-line power plants in Hammond (State Line), Waukegan, and Gary. At first the trains originated on Gulf, Mobile & Ohio in southern Illinois, with its diesels running through from Joliet. After the Clean Air Act of 1970, the plants shifted to low-sulfur Wyoming coal, and Chicago & North Western and Burlington Northern became EJ&E's coal connections. By 1975 EJ&E was again hauling more coal than steel.

When the Rock Island shut down in March 1980, EJ&E volunteered to operate RI's line from Joliet to Peoria, reasoning that Caterpillar's Peoria-area plants would be good customers. Setting up shop at the Rock's Ottawa (Ill.) yard, the J ran trains east to Joliet and west to Peoria, where several switch engines were based. While first results were promising, the Rock's trustee's outsized financial demands for sale or long-term lease caused EJ&E to end the experiment in May 1980.

By the 1970s the Baldwin center-cabs, 14 of which had been repowered by EMD with pairs of 567 engines and renumbered from 100s to 900s, were ready for retirement. (EJ&E had installed upgraded Baldwin engines in another 11 and made them 700s; prototype 100 and the 118 were not rebuilt.) Replacing them were 19 SD38s and SD38-2s from EMD during 1970-75, and in later years they were joined by seven SD38-2s from the Bessemer & Lake Erie and some Missabe Road SD9s and SD18s, including "SDM" rebuilds, as U.S. Steel roads frequently swapped units. EJ&E replaced its Alco and Baldwin switchers over time with 8

new SW1200s in 1960, and 70-odd secondhand EMDs later on.

The J and U.S. Steel's other roads by the '80s had become non-core businesses which USS wanted to monetize. At the end of 1988, EJ&E and USS's other transportation assets were conveyed to a new holding firm, Transtar, in which Blackstone Capital Partners of New York held a controlling stake and USS a minority share. Later the two stockholders split up these assets, and although the J returned to USS ownership, it was still for sale.

During the 1990s and 2000s, EJ&E returned to its belt line roots by granting trackage rights to Union Pacific, BNSF, and Canadian National for overhead traffic. CN, which had acquired Illinois Central in 1999 and Wisconsin Central in 2001, was looking to connect them and its Grand Trunk Western but retain control, and J's belt line filled that bill. USS agreed to sell the main line to CN in '07, keeping the Gary Works plant trackage as the Gary Railway. The merger was bitterly contested by on-line suburbs fearing increased train frequencies, but the Surface Transportation Board approved the deal, which closed on January 31, 2009. EJ&E's corporate existence ended in 2013 as it was merged into Wisconsin Central. Today the former EJ&E is CN's preferred artery through (around) Chicago, and Kirk Yard is its primary area freight facility.

Which proves that, if you wanted to accomplish something in early 21st century railroading, it helped to have CN boss Hunter Harrison behind you. ■

*MICHAEL W. BLASZAK, a retired Chicago attorney and much-published rail historian, has had several TRAINS bylines and now three in CLASSIC TRAINS publications.*

## EJ&E FACT FILE



(comparative figures are for 1930 and 2008)

**Route-miles:** 231 (excludes C&E rights); 198

**Locomotives:** 58; 60

**Freight cars:** 6,813; 3,382

**Headquarters city:** Chicago; Joliet after '84

**Recommended reading:** "The J: A Centennial History" by Michael W. Blaszak, August and September 1989 TRAINS; *Elgin, Joliet & Eastern in Color, Vols. 1 & 2*, by John T. Eagan Jr. (Morning Sun Books, 2013 and 2014)

**Sources:** *Historical Guide to American Railroads* (Kalmbach, 2014); *Railway Equipment Registers*; author's materials; John T. Eagan Jr.



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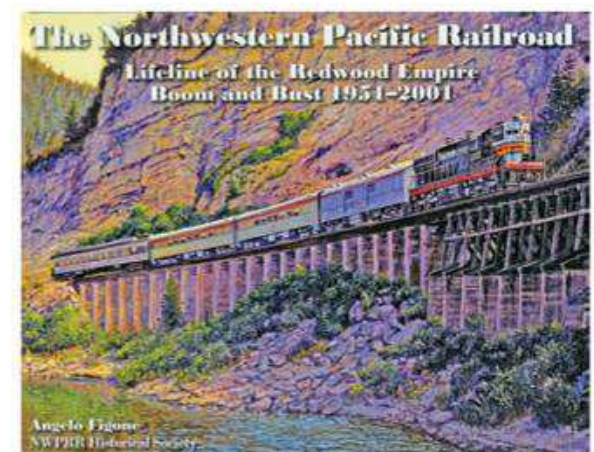


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# Rambling *on the* Reading

Between 1959 and '64,  
surplus 4-8-4s and idle  
commuter coaches  
crisscrossed southeastern  
Pennsylvania on a series  
of remarkable excursions

BY KARL ZIMMERMANN





# dings

Several hundred passengers thrill to 4-8-4 stack talk as Reading Company T-1 No. 2100 gets away from Bethlehem, Pa., with an Iron Horse Ramble excursion to West Milton on May 16, 1964.

Bob Krone



They certainly weren't the first railroad rambles. In fact the Reading Company itself had operated what it called Rail Rambles before World War II. Nor would they be the last, so perfectly does the word "ramble" fit the essence of rail excursions, those leisurely, impractical journeys that are their own excuse and made just for the pure pleasures they provide. But the series of "Iron Horse Rambles" that the Reading fielded from fall 1959 through fall 1964, 51 in all, staked that railroad's claim to that name in the memories of the many thousands of us who rode and photographed those excursions behind a trio of the road's home-built T-1 class 4-8-4s.

From the initial outing, on October 25, 1959, to the last, almost exactly five years later, the Rambles traced a spider web of routes all across eastern Pennsylvania and into New Jersey and Delaware, carrying some 50,000 happy passengers and bringing many multiples more to trackside in what proved to be a public-relations bonanza. The Reading truly did, in a sense, partially de-dieselize, as these excursions were major passenger moves, undertaken more than two years after all steam (excepting a lone shop switcher) had been mothballed. The railroad was arguably unique in resurrecting company-owned steam after such a long hiatus.



**RDG 1251, Reading Shops' 0-6-0T switcher, was the "special live steam feature" the road promised riders of a May 2, 1959, diesel trip from Jersey City. Also on hand: stored T-1s.**

Karl Zimmermann

Those first excursions in fall 1959 came at a time of severe deprivation for fanciers of mainline steam action. Over the preceding decade, steam had been driven from the high iron on all but a handful of roads, and those few pockets would succumb to diesels by mid-1960. Steam excursions ran, intermittently, on Norfolk & Western, the two big Canadian systems, the Burlington Route, and others. A few roads would establish, to varying degrees, steam-excursion programs in the 1960s, but in 1959 the Reading's Iron Horse Rambles were in a class of their own. Circumstance had put the hardware at Reading's disposal, but that wouldn't have been enough had not management been willing to lend an ear to the pleas of enthusiasts and then think expansively and creatively about how things might play out to its benefit.

First, that hardware. During two years beginning in 1945, Reading took 30 of its roughly two-decades-old Baldwin-built I-10sa class heavy Consolidations and, in its own shops at Reading, Pa., turned them into T-1 Northerns, three of which would become famous a decade and a half later. A number of factors drove this decision. The average age of Reading's freight power was 29 years, so fresh blood was needed — not more locomotives, but better ones. Although World War II was winding down, new designs remained prohibited by the War Production Board, but rebuilding and modernization were permitted. Revelle W. Brown, then the Reading's president, had come from the Lehigh Valley and was a fan of that railroad's 37-strong 4-8-4 fleet.

Though essentially freight locomotives, the T-1s, with their 70-inch driving wheels, could also do heavy passenger work — a characteristic that would play out splendidly in a way far from the



minds of their designers. They were authorized to run 65 mph, a significant increase over the 2-8-0s' 50-mph maximum. In fact, the final 10 T-1s, with roller-bearing-equipped drivers, were planned for dual service, which would have allowed them to haul troop trains if needed from Camp Kilmer in New Jersey and Pennsylvania's Indiantown Gap. (All the T-1s had roller bearings on the lead, trailing, and tender trucks.)

The Consolidations' boilers were all reused, as were the fireboxes from half the locomotives, plus an assortment of other parts: whistles, bells, water gauges, headlights, air pumps, safety valves, and grate rigging. New components were supplied by Baldwin, which took the lead in



*Trip fliers, 1959, '60, and '62*





**T-1 2124, refusing to be upstaged by the Baldwin diesels assisting her, storms up the 2.6-percent grade to Locust Summit on October 25, 1959, with the first of the 51 Iron Horse Rambles.**

Aaron G. Fryer

designing the locomotives, or affiliated companies. Cast steel underframes weighing 60,000 pounds apiece came from General Steel Castings of Eddystone, Pa.

The T-1s were judged a huge success, but — typical of late-era steam — they had brief lives in regular service. By late winter in 1954 the railroad's only operating steam locomotive was an 0-6-0T dating from 1918 that served as the switcher at the road's shops in Reading. In June 1956, nine T-1s were leased to the Pennsylvania Railroad to alleviate a power shortage, but when they were returned in 1957, all but one was scrapped. The Reading's own traffic surge in late 1956 into early '57 put steam back in the bellies of several T-1s, but that was it. Still,



**There were two other Rambles in 1959, both to Valley Forge State Park (from Harrisburg on November 1, Philadelphia on the 14th). On the second, 2124 faces east at RDG's station in the park.**

Karl Zimmermann





The Rambles put the Reading in the public eye like nothing else. The inaugural trip (left) prepares to depart Wayne Junction, Philadelphia, for Shamokin, Pa. At Wilmington, Del., on May 18, 1963 (right), No. 2100 cuts off while 2102 waits to take the train back to its origin, Bethlehem, Pa.

Left, Aaron G. Fryer; right, George H. Drury



No. 2124 eases onto the turntable at Bridgeport, Pa., after bringing a train from Philadelphia to Valley Forge. Solid black in regular service, the T-1s were dressed up for the Rambles with white driver tires and other touches including (after October 1960) RDG diamond emblems.

Karl Zimmermann

by late summer 1958, 20 of the 30 4-8-4s remained on the roster, and steam-starved rail enthusiasts had taken notice. Eventually, the fans won their point with Reading's management, and President Joseph A. Fisher finally gave the go-ahead.

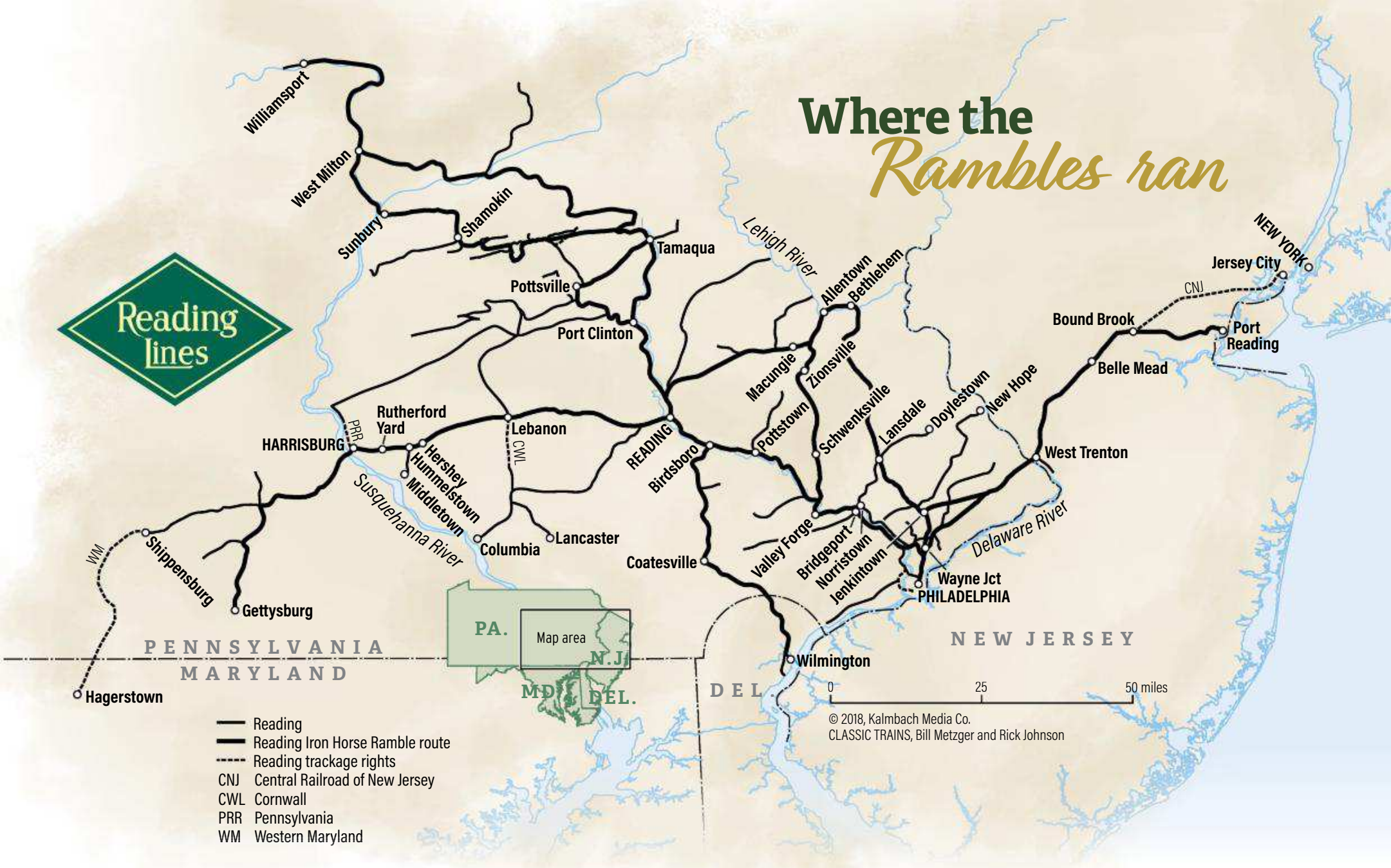
### "SOFT OPENING"

Actually, the T-1s' presentation to the fans had what today might be called a "soft opening," on May 2, 1959, when the New Jersey Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the New York Division of the Railway Enthusiasts sponsored a diesel-powered excursion from Jersey Central Terminal in Jersey City over the CNJ-RDG route to Reading to photograph stored T-1s, spotted for the occasion. A "special live steam feature" was promised. Since I rode the excursion, I can confirm that the enticing come-on referred to the 0-6-0T shop goat.

The Reading approached the possibility of steam excursions in a highly pragmatic way. Significantly, it decided to operate the Rambles itself, for greater control and maximum public relations benefit, which turned out to be vast. It saw railfans as the primary market, but realized that they alone would not be enough. For success, the trips would need to attract the general public too, what in those days we fans called "daisy-pickers," and to that end the Reading would move departure points around to



# Where the *Rambles ran*



serve different markets and choose a variety of destinations.

There would be “themed” trips; fall foliage would turn out to be a popular perennial, as would trips to Gettysburg, Pa., that included a tour of the battlefield. For the fans, an open-door combine with electrical outlets for tape recorders was in the consist, and on each trip were staged carefully planned photo runbys, which the railroad initially called “speed picture stops.” Runs over freight-only lines such as the Perkiomen and Catawissa branches also attracted enthusiasts.

Certainly the railroad recognized that these operations would be complex. The only two coaling facilities surviving on this thoroughly dieselized railroad were at Reading and at Rutherford Yard near Harrisburg. Most water plugs had been removed. A T-1 could run about 100 miles between water stops and 175 miles before taking on coal. A clamshell crane and carload of coal would turn up when and where necessary, while local fire companies used hydrants and hoses to slake the engines’ thirst. The 4-8-4s were too large to fit under two bridges in Philadelphia between 16th Street Junction and Reading Terminal, the most obvious starting point for excursions, so the rail-

road would need to improvise, generally by starting Philadelphia-area trips at Wayne Junction (5 miles north of the Terminal) or Jenkintown (11 miles out). By the time of the first Iron Horse Ramble, seven and a half years had passed since the Reading had operated a passenger train behind steam, so it’s fair to say the railroad was out of practice.

Along with the availability of the T-1s, on the plus side was Reading’s large fleet of open-window commuter coaches, which was mostly idle on weekends. Still quite active in hauling people, the railroad had a functioning passenger traffic department and a fine and fully staffed public relations department, which would mobilize an aggressive effort through print media, radio, and TV to reach the general public. Many fans learned of the trips through one of the long, 5-inch-wide fliers that hung for the taking in many RDG stations and area hobby shops. Readers of *TRAINS* magazine would see notices in the “Running Extra” calendar listings at the back of each issue, an invaluable source in those long-ago days before the internet.

That said, management realized the Rambles would need to be an all-hands-on-deck, company-wide project. Joining

the passenger department in the planning and execution of the trips would be representatives from the mechanical, transportation, dining-car, and police departments. The train’s 23-man crew typically would include the engineer and fireman, plus a boilermaker, master mechanic, road foreman of engines, conductor, brakemen, at least two company policemen, a public relations representative, five or six passenger-department staff, a six-man dining-car crew, and a company doctor.

Five T-1s had been set aside for the Rambles. No. 2124 would get them started. In 1961 No. 2100 would join the party, at first interchangeably with 2124 and later sometimes doubleheaded. When



*Record album, 1961*





**Though not generally considered the handsomest of 4-8-4s, the T-1s possessed the balanced lines inherent in the type — and they were unmistakably Reading, from above-center headlights to arched cab windows. No. 2124 is at Gettysburg, the most frequent Rambles destination.**

Karl Zimmermann

2124's flues expired in 1962, that pioneer Rambles locomotive would be sold to F. Nelson Blount to be part of his collection. No. 2102, the replacement, carried on until the fires were dropped on the Rambles. No. 2101 was held as protection but never used, and No. 2123 was kept to be cannibalized for parts.

The first excursion ran on Sunday, October 25, 1959, from Wayne Junction to Shamokin. It was a huge success, carrying 950 passengers, including long-time TRAINS editor David P. Morgan, who reported on the trip with his typical eloquence. The railroad handed out gifts: red bandannas as cinder protection, since few could resist hanging out the open windows for a better look at the Northern up ahead, and engineer's caps with a Reading Lines diamond patch. (I would ride

the third trip, three weeks later, to Valley Forge, and I still have the hat.) Morgan, who called No. 2124 "a sure-footed, clean-exhausted engine," commented that the "16 lightweight suburban-service coaches and baggage cars behind were child's play for a locomotive with 68,000 pounds tractive force, excluding the booster."

This maiden voyage presented some operating challenges, all successfully met. At Tamaqua, Pa., after the South Ward Fire Co. filled the T-1's tank, a pair of Baldwin road-switchers was added on the point to assist on the 2.6-percent climb to Locust Summit. Morgan reported that "the lead engineer committed an unpardonable error. He sounded his air horns for the first few crossings. No. 2124's hogger would have none of it, and the 4-8-4 sounded off so belligerently that quite

quickly the air horns were heard no more." At Shamokin was another hurdle: the wye, which no T-1 had ever navigated. With great care, 2124 was eased around it. No doubt there were sighs of relief at the end.

### FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

That first trip was in many ways a prototype for the 50 that would follow, whatever the destination. There would be photo runbys, with Port Clinton on the Schuylkill River the classic spot for these events, always trip highlights. There would be souvenir giveaways



*Engineer's cap, 1959*

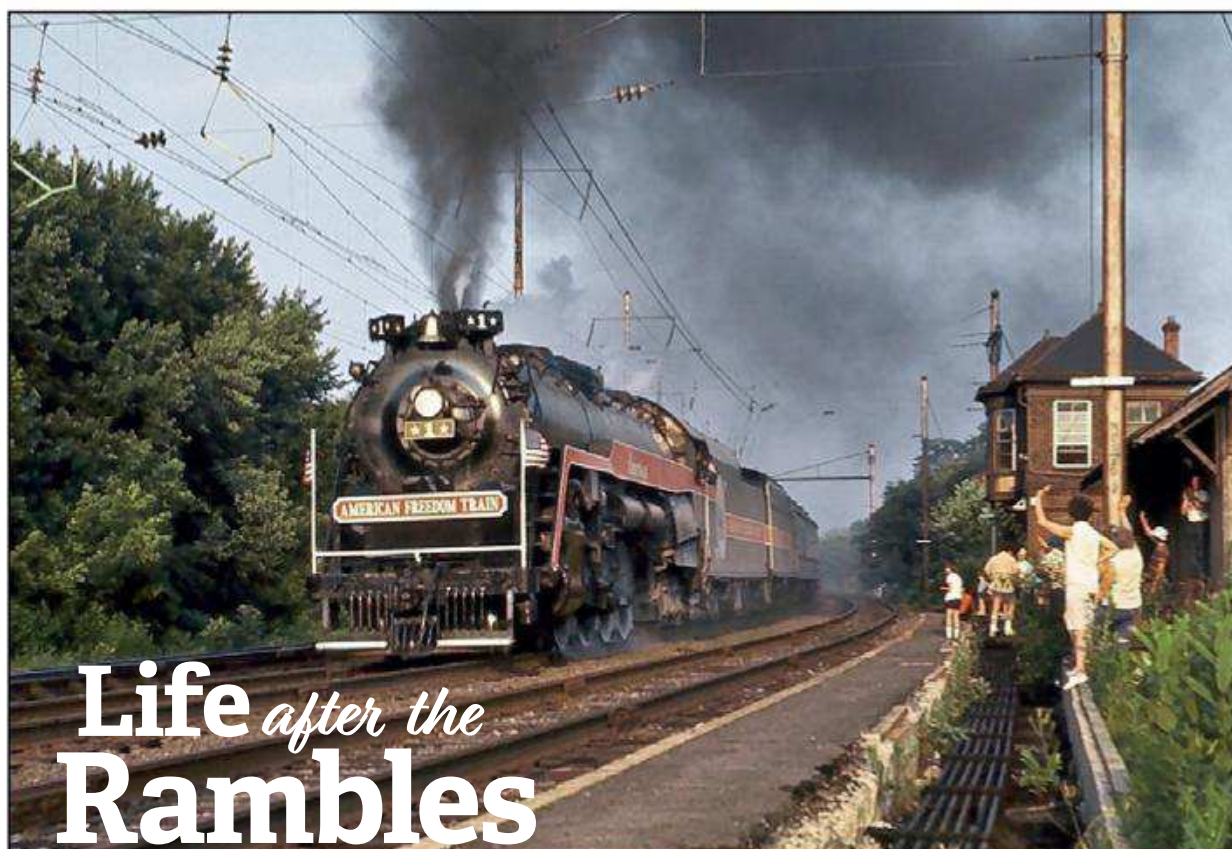


— a small record album of train sounds in 1961, for instance. But there would be evolution too. On some occasions, double-heading would allow a longer consist. During their five years, Rambles would go to 16 different destinations. Gettysburg, with the attraction of the battlefield, was the most frequent, with a dozen visits. West Milton with nine and Tamaqua with five were runners-up. For whatever reason, Valley Forge, the destination of the second and third trips in the inaugural season, was never repeated. Except for two trips to Wilmington, Del., and one to Port Reading, N.J., all destinations were in Pennsylvania (although some trips did originate at Belle Mead, West Trenton, Bound Brook, and Port Reading, all in New Jersey). The T-1s were busiest in 1961, when they ran 14 times.

Fans did not care for the one-note freight whistles the T-1s inherited from their I-10sa forbears, so for its second season No. 2124 was fitted with a sweet-sounding chime whistle salvaged from a scrapped G-3 Pacific. Shop switcher No. 1251 would sometimes greet the Rambles in Reading. For the June 18, 1960, trip, it was spotted at the depot and passengers were welcomed into the cab to blow its whistle, which came from a G-1 Pacific; local residents were not pleased by the cacophony, and this amenity was not repeated. Again on the subject of whistles, when passing the Colorado Fuel & Iron plant at Birdsboro, Pa., the T-1s would exchange whistle salutes with former RDG Camelback 0-4-0 No. 4 at work there.

Because of demand, in fall 1963 the Reading scheduled an additional “farewell” run — for a while the end had seemed in sight, prompting “farewell” excursions — on October 19, but it didn’t work out as planned. With drought conditions worsening since the previous trip a week before, state authorities requested cancellation. The railroad ran the trip with diesels, offered a refund, and had a T-1 in steam at Reading as a sop to those who chose to stick with the trip. Ridership was well below the usual Ramble headcount. However, the no-steam announcement did contain an upbeat bit of news. “We know you’ll be interested to learn,” it read, “that we are studying ways and means to make it possible to operate Iron Horse Rambles next year.” No doubt that made disappointment among the faithful easier to swallow. Perhaps there might be one more season. And there was.

That unplanned appearance was not the only time diesels played a role in the Rambles. The T-1s were too heavy for the



American Freedom Train No. 1 (ex-RDG 2101) westbound on Conrail at Cly, Pa., July 1, 1976. Bob Kise

**There is more to the stories** of the three T-1s that powered the Rambles, as well as their back-up, and that narrative is not over yet. No. 2124 remains part of the Steamtown collection, since 1986 at Scranton, Pa., under the auspices of the National Park Service. Nos. 2100 and 2101 had been purchased by Streigel Equipment & Supply, presumably to be cut up; after a decade in a Baltimore scrapyard, both were acquired in 1975 by Ross Rowland for his *American Freedom Train*. As AFT No. 1, the 2101 pulled the train on its eastern legs, where clearances were deemed too restrictive for the primary engine, Southern Pacific 4449. In 1977, in yellow-and-orange-highlighted Chessie System dress and with its original number restored, the 4-8-4 began two seasons of powering *Chessie Steam Specials*. Damaged in a Kentucky roundhouse fire, No. 2101 came to the B&O Railroad Museum in a swap that gave Rowland ex-Chesapeake & Ohio 614; the T-1 now is displayed at the museum in *American Freedom Train* livery.

Rowland had purchased No. 2100 as a parts source for the AFT. Since then the locomotive has bounced from place to place and owner to owner in a saga that included a spell in Canada during which it was converted to oil-firing. In 2015, it was leased to the Ohio-based American Steam Railroad Preservation Association for restoration in Cleveland.

No. 2102 was sold to Steam Tours of Akron, Ohio, in 1967 and operated for eight years on fan trips in the East and Midwest and, briefly, on the Greenbrier Scenic Railroad in West Virginia. In 1973, it temporarily assumed the identity of “Delaware & Hudson 302” for that carrier’s sesquicentennial. Owned by short-line entrepreneur Andy Muller since 1985, the 4-8-4 hauled passengers on (and beyond) Muller’s Blue Mountain & Reading until 1993; it’s currently at parent Reading, Blue Mountain & Northern’s shop at Port Clinton. — *Karl Zimmermann*

Catawissa Branch, featured on some excursions, requiring diesels to take over between Tamaqua and West Milton. Trips out of Reading Terminal would perforce start behind diesels, and diesels would sometimes handle segments of longer trips, particularly after-dark return legs.

Twice during their Rambles years the T-1s ventured off-line to help other railroads celebrate. On June 4, 1960, No. 2124 pulled a special over the Lehigh & Hudson River between Maybrook, N.Y., and Belvidere, N.J., for that railroad’s cen-

tennial. Four years later, near the end, on August 15 and 16, 1964, the 2100 ran a more ambitious program for Baltimore & Ohio’s “Iron Horse Days.” This comprised a variety of trips: Philadelphia to Baltimore to get the weekend started, and the reverse to end it, and two round trips each day between Baltimore and Washington on the timings of the *Capitol Limited* and locals to which RDCs were normally assigned. Reading coaches were hired along with the 4-8-4, supplemented by B&O equipment for the replaced





trains' regular passengers.

No. 2124 even made a movie appearance, filmed on December 2, 1959, in 20th Century-Fox's *From the Terrace*, based on John O'Hara's novel and starring Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, and Myrna Loy. A 1946 scene of a train arriving at Reading Terminal was scripted — a problem, of course, since a T-1 couldn't operate into the Terminal, and No. 2124 was at that time the only big engine under steam in the East. CNJ's Jersey City Terminal stood in, and probably none but a handful of savvy railfans was the wiser.

### "UPROAR IN THE RANKS"

The Rambles were often mentioned in the *New York Times*, and what turned out to be the program's last reprise was covered on April 5, 1964, by Ward Allan Howe, who regularly wrote in the paper on subjects of interest to rail enthusiasts. "The Iron Horse Rambles will run again," he began. "Bowling to the wishes of hundreds of rail fans, the Reading Railroad has decided to bring back its popular steam excursions. . . . Reading discontinued the Rambles," Howe continued, "thinking it had exhausted the market and also because of operating problems. However, it had not reckoned with the fans.

"What the line described as an 'uproar in the ranks' spread into a spontaneous letter-writing campaign urging the road to reconsider its decision. The fans won." This was one more victory for the rail enthusiasts, whose pressure had gotten the whole enterprise rolling in the first place. But it would be the last.

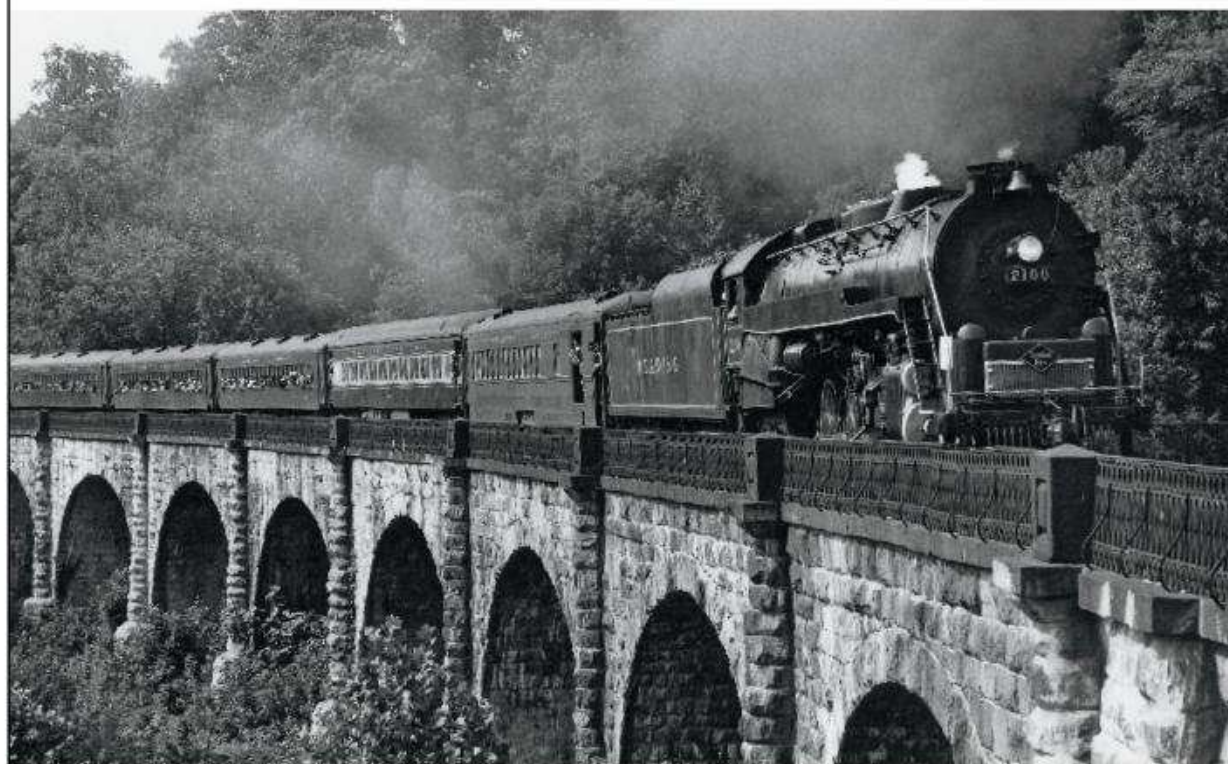
With scares each year beginning in 1962, it was inevitable that the curtain someday would be rung down on the Iron Horse Rambles, and that finally happened in fall 1964. Still, the September 19, 1964, excursion from Bound Brook, N.J., to Tamaqua behind No. 2102, the 50th Ramble, was celebratory. Alvin Smith, a veteran of 41 Rambles, was given a cab ride, as was Carolyn Wooster, holder of the winning ticket in a drawing. That

## Off-line adventures

At right, actresses Joanne Woodward (left) and Myrna Loy pose on 2124's pilot beam during filming of *From the Terrace* at CNJ's Jersey City Terminal in late 1959; the 4-8-4 wore a garland of flowers and a "Biggest star of the year" sign. Below, the 2100 crosses B&O's famous Thomas Viaduct outside Baltimore with one of the road's "Iron Horse Days" trains on August 16, 1964. In 1960, No. 2124 helped Lehigh & Hudson River mark its centennial.



Above, Don Wood; below, Robert F. Collins

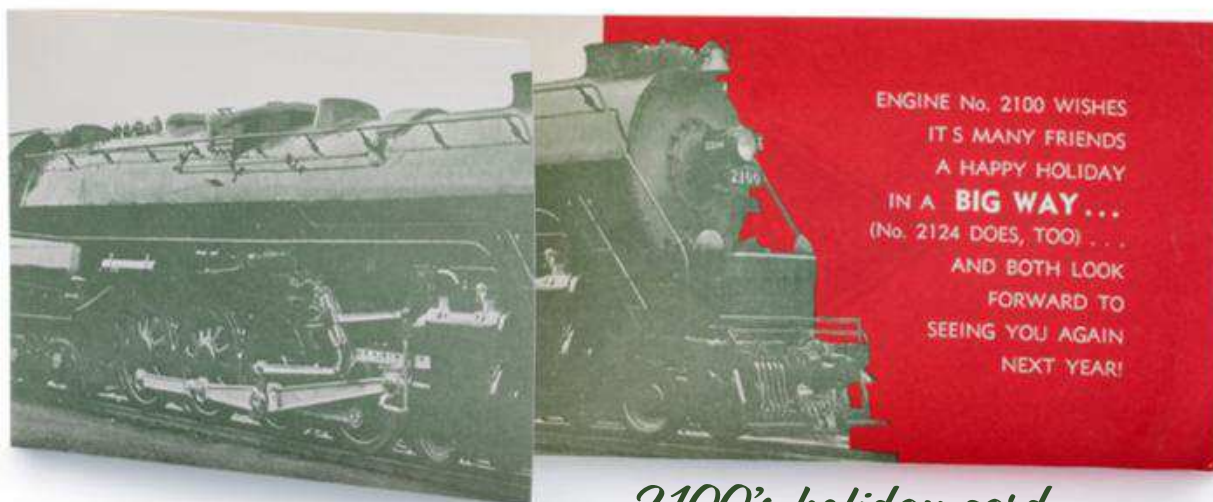


very round number might have been an appropriate finale, but the railroad would run one more excursion, on October 17, ending this grand pageant at 51 showings. The Reading, operating in the red since 1960 and facing "extensive and costly repairs" to the locomotives, had little choice but to let the stage go dark. The show was over. Although assuredly there would be nothing quite like it again, memories remain, plus photos — and artifacts.

There's my engineer's cap with the Reading patch, the trip fliers I collected, a red-and-green holiday card from the railroad, and my 45-rpm-sized but 33⅓-rpm record. Though it crackles with surface noise, it's still evocative. Consider the cut featuring departure from Port Clinton, and the interplay of No. 2124's chime whistle and No. 2100's shrill hoot, as they call in the flag and then depart, exhaust and whistles echoing off Blue Mountain.

The last sentence of my tattered record jacket's liner notes seems an appropriate valedictory. "The events of the day have passed all too quickly," it reads, "but the cherished memories of steam will live on — like the closing whistles dying away in the night as the train rushes toward its destination." ■

KARL ZIMMERMANN, a longtime New Jersey resident, is a prolific book and magazine author, and a regular contributor to CT since our second issue, Summer 2000.



2100's holiday card



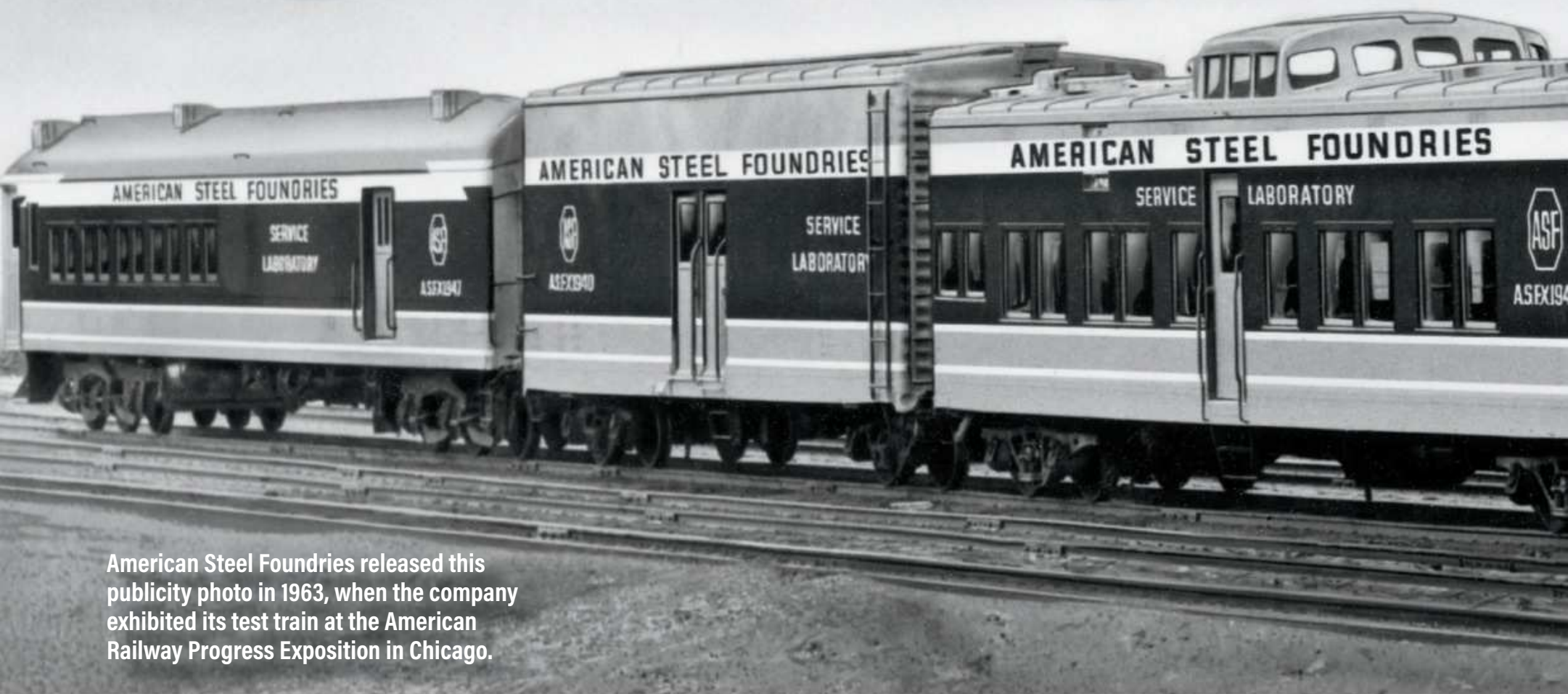
Photo runbys ("speed picture stops") at Port Clinton, Pa., were a highlight for passengers on many of the Iron Horse Rambles. Engines 2124 and 2100 put on a typically impressive show at the scenic location in 1960 or '61.

Karl Zimmermann





# ROLLING LA



American Steel Foundries released this publicity photo in 1963, when the company exhibited its test train at the American Railway Progress Exposition in Chicago.

## THE AMERICAN STEEL FOUNDRIES TEST TRAIN HELPED



It might be a warm summer morning in the early 1950s on the Illinois Central near Clinton, Ill.; or maybe a cold January day along the Pere Marquette outside of Grand Rapids, Mich. There's the sound of a fast-running steam locomotive in the distance . . . the railroad's in a hurry with something today. Shortly an engine and an unusual 5-car train blast into town. Amazingly, as the special roars by, the rear car disconnects from the train! Brakes can be heard; the car and the rest of its train come to safe stops a half-mile down the line. You've just gotten a rare glimpse of a unique operation — the American Steel Foundries test train.

ASF's rolling "service laboratory" was the culmination of years of research aimed at improving the operation of the trucks and brakes on freight and passenger cars, leading to the success of the company's A-3 Ride Control freight-car truck. This re-

In a photo from a 1943 ASF publication (left), Missouri Pacific 4-6-2 No. 6624 makes time with the test train. After World War II, the baggage car between the two boxcars was replaced with a former troop sleeper, as shown in ASF artwork (right and following pages).

All illustrations, American Steel Foundries



BY JAMES E. DIERKS

# LABORATORY



## ADVANCE THE SCIENCE OF RUNNING-GEAR DESIGN

search and development work dates back to the early 20th century, with the creation of a company testing lab equipped to simulate and design for the increasing speeds and loads encountered by freight-car trucks. Such lab-based work provided valuable insight, and some testing was done on instrumented freight cars to correlate that work in real-world conditions.

In 1931 the Chicago-based company put together a train of

four loaded coal hopper cars, a caboose, three test cars, and a second caboose equipped with recording instruments. Chicago & North Western was the host railroad, operating the train at speeds up to 60 mph on the main line west to Clinton, Iowa. This train and its accompanying technicians were the company's first version of a dedicated set of equipment for real-world testing.

A further step came in 1940 with the purchase of two stan-

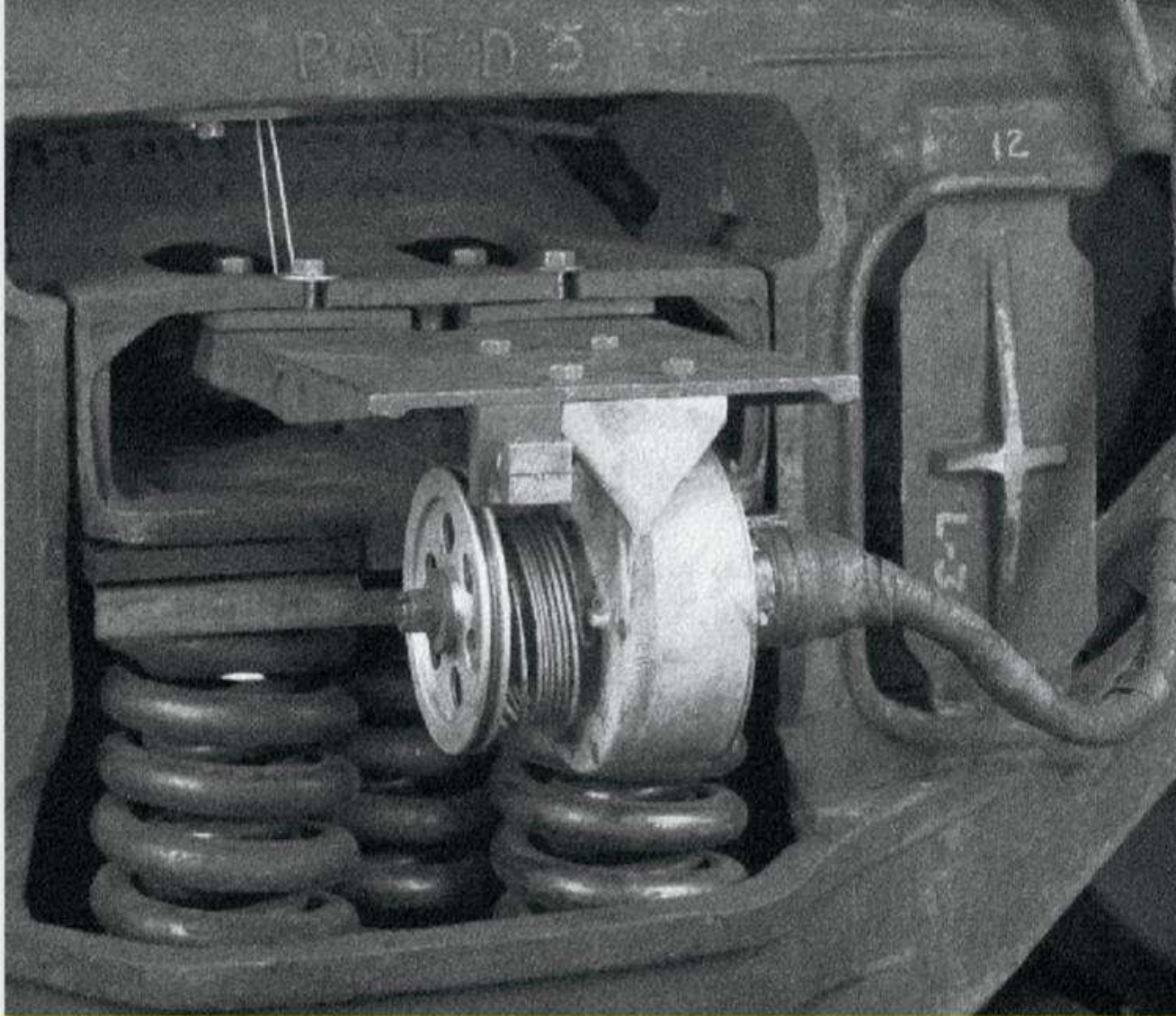
### SERVICE LABORATORY TEST TRAIN



#### BUFFER CAR

Cushions test cars of the Service Laboratory from undesirable influences of the locomotive. This car also is used to store equipment and house the test train personnel.





ASF designed and built spring deflection recorders to provide measurements during test runs.

Boxcar 1941 exhibits an overhead monorail system

dard boxcars. These cars were then fitted with glass windows in the floors to permit viewing wheel and truck performance at speed, and cranes and fixtures to permit loading heavy weights. State-of-the-art instrumentation was installed to measure and record speed, spring deflections, and vertical and lateral movements of the trucks and the carbody. A 5 kW generator and batteries provided electrical power, and phone jacks throughout the cars facilitated communications among the technicians.

Important details were attended to, such as attaching instruments directly to the cover plates of the carbody bolsters to eliminate any potential cushioning from the wood flooring. "V-shaped" bay windows allowed technicians to observe and record track conditions, switches, curves, and grade crossings. Even the weather conditions were carefully documented, as performance had to be evaluated in all extremes of temperature and precipitation.

One of the boxcars, with conventional trucks, provided a standard with which to compare data taken on the other car, which was equipped with the new or modified components being evaluated. At this stage in the test train's development, tech-

nicians worked and lived in a variety of conditions. Sometimes the host railroad provided a coach and a baggage car for additional test equipment and the train operated on its own; other times the two boxcars were simply added to a regular freight train with technicians sharing the caboose with the train crew.

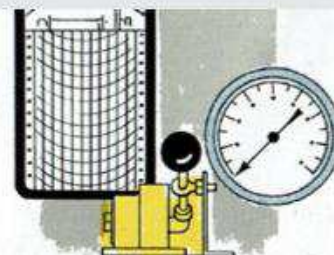
The first high-speed test runs made with these special boxcars were on the Milwaukee Road between Milwaukee and Portage, Wis. Interlaced with the road's famous *Hiawatha* speedsters, a total of 55 runs were made from August to November 1940 at speeds up to 95 mph. Similar speeds were attained during test runs on Missouri Pacific's Arkansas Division in 1941. The train logged 8,480 miles on the New York Central between Englewood (Chicago) and Elkhart, Ind., and by the end of 1945 many more miles had been run on Santa Fe, C&NW, and Great Northern.

Serving on board the test cars was challenging, as the technicians were exposed to the noise and temperature conditions of high-speed freight railroading. Scheduling the test train amid the heavy traffic of World War II and postwar prosperity meant long waits followed by quick responses to short time windows.



#### 50 TON TEST CAR

Equipped with instruments to measure speed, vertical and lateral shocks. Loading can be varied with cast-iron blocks. Glass-covered ports in floor permit inspection of trucks while under way.

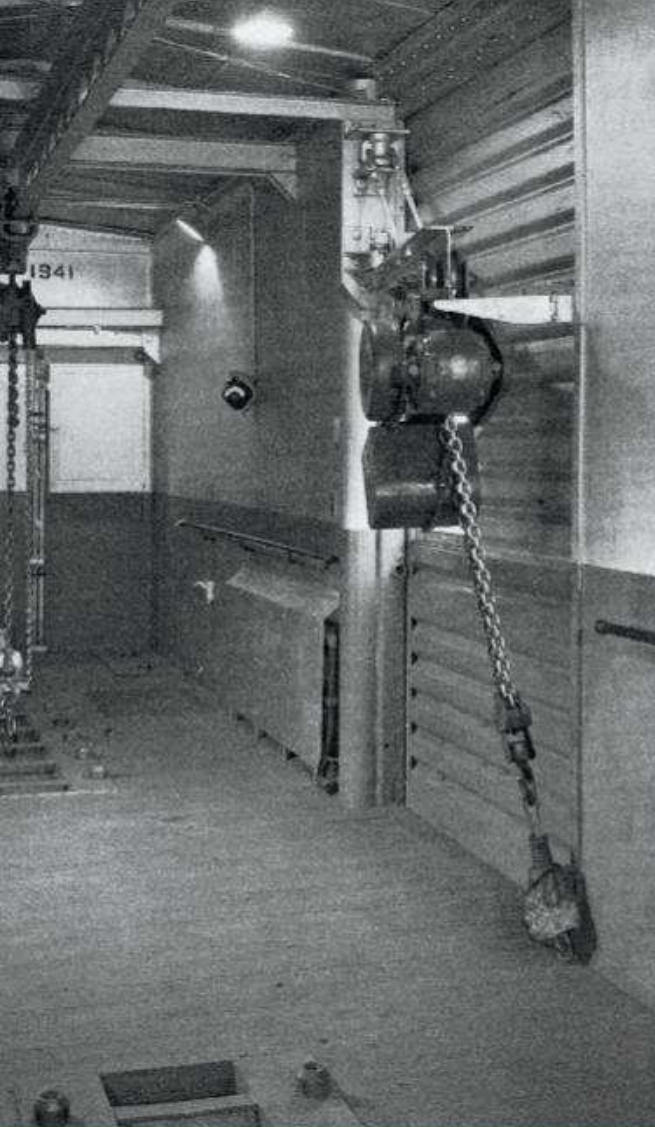


#### OPERATIONS CAR

"Nerve center," containing indicating and recording instruments and an independent Diesel-driven generator. More than 200 electrical circuits with 40 miles of wiring interconnect all testing apparatus!







for handling heavy weights that simulated lading. Hinged windows of thick safety glass were at each corner of the test cars to observe running gear.

All illustrations, American Steel Foundries

Through it all, instruments had to be maintained in calibration and data preserved for later analysis in the engineering offices.

### NEW CARS FOR THE TEST TRAIN

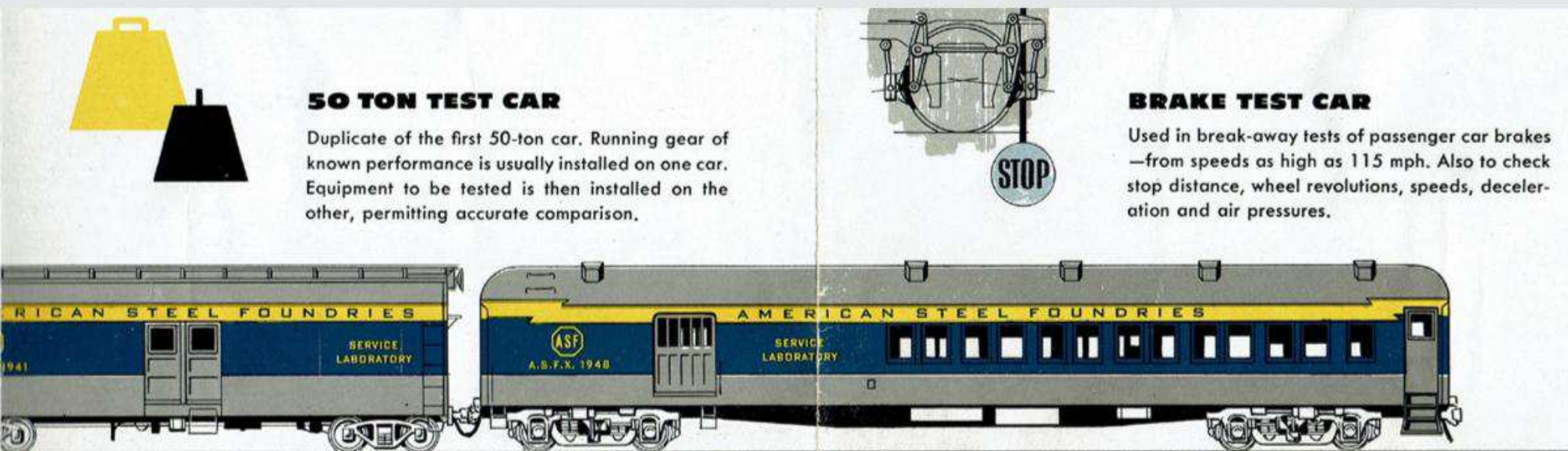
The following year, 1946, saw the introduction of an operations car built from a Pullman troop sleeper and fitted with a cupola. This car was an improvement over borrowed baggage cars and allowed equipment and wiring cables to be more efficiently laid out in fixed positions. The operations car was placed between ASF's two test boxcars during test runs.

In 1947 the company purchased two combination coach-baggage cars. One served as a buffer between the locomotive and the first boxcar, as well as to house the technical crew and to store equipment. The second combine was at the rear of the five-car train and was equipped for special passenger-car brake tests. Equipment was included to permit wetting and/or sanding the rails to simulate actual service conditions. At speeds up to 115 mph, the rear car could be uncoupled for breakaway tests, checking stopping distances, wheel slip, deceleration rates, and brake-pipe air-pressure changes. Various de-

signs of brake rigging were tested as well as comparison tests of clasp (shoe) brakes versus disc brakes on wet and dry rail.

Starting with those first high-speed runs on the Milwaukee Road, until October 1952, the ASF test train made 994 runs and logged a total of 145,842 miles. In the late 1950s, more sophisticated equipment led the company to expand its testing laboratories and the test train eventually was eased into retirement. ASF successor Amsted Rail owes its leadership position in the railroad supply industry to the developments perfected on the test train. Through the data recorded and test results obtained aboard the rolling laboratory, improvements in spring packages, side frames, bolsters, and brake rigging made it possible to satisfy a variety of speed and loading needs for safe operation of railroads around the world. ■

*JAMES E. DIERKS is retired from a management career with Eastman Kodak in Rochester, N.Y., and is a trustee and volunteer at the New York Museum of Transportation. His father and grandfather both worked for American Steel Foundries; although he spoke with them about it often, he never had a chance to ride the test train.*





# AMTRAK'S early

**T**he 1970s were a pivotal time for America's rail passenger service. As the decade began, the name "Amtrak" had not yet been heard of, just the working title "Railpax," as plans came together to quasi-nationalize the intercity passenger-train network. This mainly was an effort to relieve the railroads, particularly Penn Central, of the burden of providing passenger service. By the end of the decade, boosted by the 1973 "gasoline crisis" that, to the surprise of many critics, stimulated Amtrak ridership, the National Railroad Passenger Corp. (the company's official name) was well on its way to establishing a corporate identity.

I was in my third year in the Business College of my hometown University of Cincinnati when Amtrak began, and I thought I should give the carrier some badly needed advertising help. I bought classified ads in the college newspaper that told students of the destinations available. Some ads gave sample fares, and all provided Amtrak's toll-free phone number. I never spent more than \$2 on any ad, but I also never knew whether my efforts brought any students to Cincinnati Union Terminal.

As a junior, it was time to think about a career, so I wrote Amtrak for an employment application and attached some of my Amtrak ads. A few weeks later, the mail brought an application, plus a "thank you" letter from Amtrak President Roger Lewis. He said the grass-roots support of Amtrak in the company's first year had been unbelievable. Under separate cover he sent a 12-foot-long cloth banner with the Amtrak logo, and a coffee mug. This was all fun stuff for a young train supporter!

Two years later, in 1974, after I'd graduated and was working on the Mississippi River steamer *Delta Queen*, I got a call from Amtrak. Soon I was hired as a sales representative, and went to Washington, D.C., for orientation. Our field sales force consisted of about 75 people nationwide. It was our job to increase revenues from travel agents, most of whom regarded the long-distance passenger train as an alien mode of transportation. Further, the agents were spoiled by an airline industry that wasn't yet deregulated. Air fares were stable, and air travel in general was still considered glamorous. The agents also enjoyed the new automated reservations and ticketing systems the airlines were designing for them.

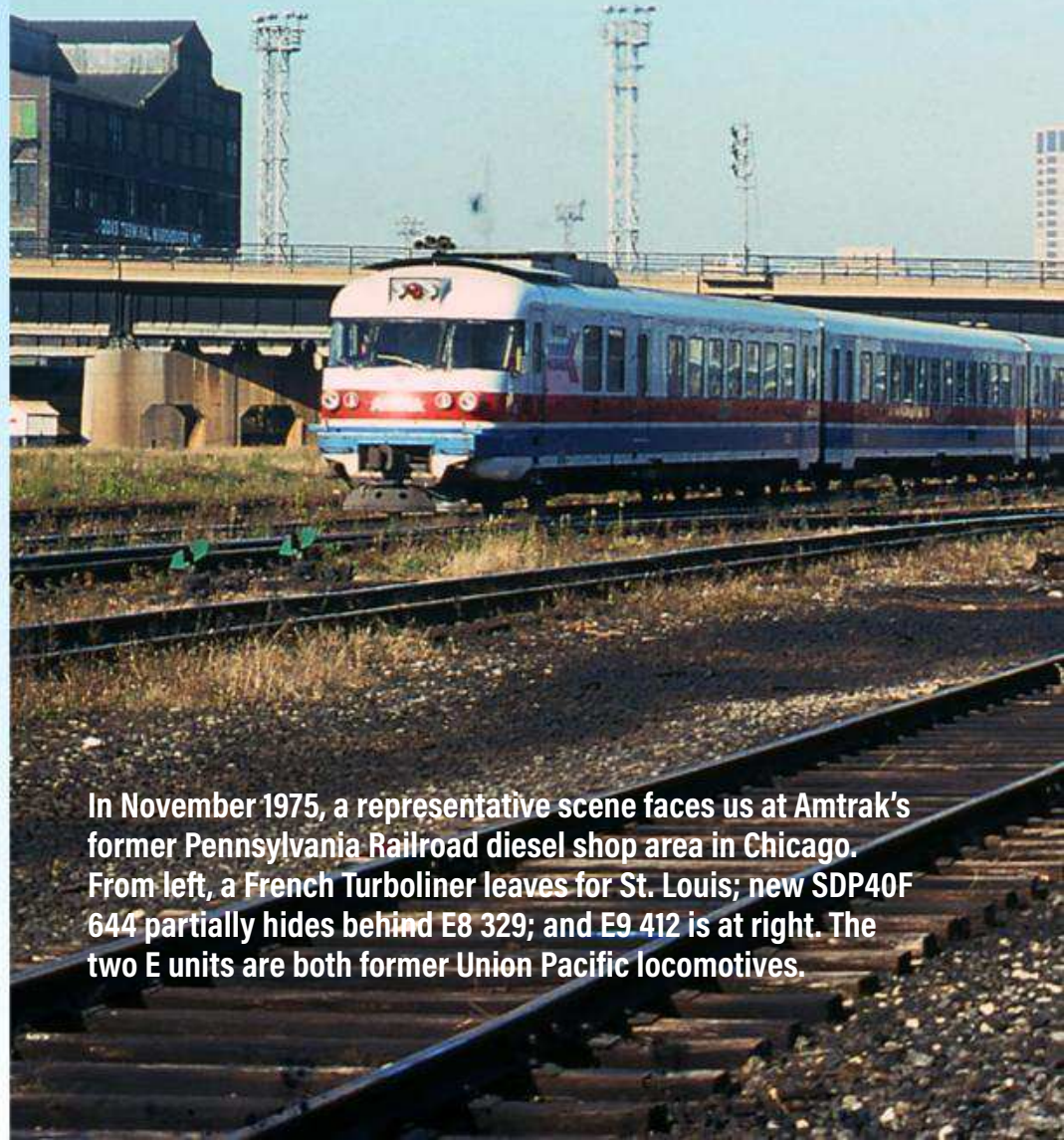
Selling Amtrak was so different from selling air travel that many travel agents shied away from recommending rail. I realized early on that training would help overcome some of their fears. Our young Marketing Department was still assembling a library of equipment images. Most of the photos available were

slides of East Coast subjects, including the Metroliners, major stations, and the United Aircraft Turbo trains. Being based in Chicago, I decided to fill the gap in Midwest and Western coverage by taking my own slides, mainly of car interiors.

Most of the images on the following pages are not what I would necessarily have shown in a travel agent training seminar, because few agents would care about the latest locomotives. But as an employee (and railfan), this is how I saw my company, and I didn't see many employees photographing Amtrak in those early years.

Although Amtrak would later improve by almost every standard of measure, in the early 1970s it seemed the only thing we could hang our hat on was the *promise* that things would get better. The carrier had no choice.

As Amtrak nears its 50th anniversary, the employees who were there during those early years are either in other jobs, retired, or deceased. But there is a certain brotherhood and *esprit de corps* among those original employees. I still look back on the '70s as the best decade to have been with Amtrak.



In November 1975, a representative scene faces us at Amtrak's former Pennsylvania Railroad diesel shop area in Chicago. From left, a French Turboliner leaves for St. Louis; new SDP40F 644 partially hides behind E8 329; and E9 412 is at right. The two E units are both former Union Pacific locomotives.



After hiring on in 1974, I witnessed many changes,  
highlighted by the company's first new cars and locomotives

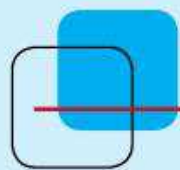
BY DENNY HAMILTON • Photos by the author

# years

## FROM THE INSIDE







## THE NIGHT BEFORE AMTRAK



At 6:40 p.m., the last eastbound Chesapeake & Ohio *George Washington* departs the famed Art Deco Cincinnati Union Terminal for the nation's capital behind two E8s of partner Baltimore & Ohio. Ironically, C&O had inaugurated the train exactly 39 years before, on April 30, 1932.



The final *James Whitcomb Riley*, a three-car vestige of New York Central's finest Mid-western streamliner (and NYC's last named train), has arrived from Chicago on Track 2, and now the clock ticks down to 11:25 p.m., when N&W's *Pocahontas* for Norfolk will become CUT's last pre-Amtrak departure. In the cab of GP9 515 on Track 3 are engineer William A. McCoy and fireman T. J. Nichols, veterans who were working at the end of N&W steam a dozen years before.

Until May 1, 1971, Cincinnati Union Terminal still hosted 18 passenger trains a day, but many were just shadows of what they had been. Remarkably there were still three sleeping-car lines, on Penn Central (ex-PRR) from New York, C&O from Washington, and N&W from Roanoke. Counting NYC/PRR and B&O/C&O routes as historically separate, six of the Queen City's seven Class I roads, all except Southern, still terminated trains at CUT.

To record the landmark day in my hometown, I skipped my classes to be at CUT on Friday, April 30, 1971, contacting officials in advance for permission to be on the property. I spent the entire day at the Terminal, from early morning through late

evening. Cincinnati always had been an origin/destination point, but Amtrak made it into a run-through city, with one train each way between Washington and Chicago via C&O and Penn Central's ex-NYC Big Four Route.

The service kept two pre-Amtrak names, being the *James Whitcomb Riley* west of Cincinnati and the *George Washington* east of there. (The train kept the old pattern of utilizing Illinois Central trackage rights between Kankakee, Ill., and IC's Central Station in Chicago, shifting to Union Station on March 5, 1972, when Amtrak consolidated all its Windy City trains there.) Cincinnati Union Terminal's balloon track north of the depot was used to reverse the Amtrak trains' direction.





## TURBOS: AMTRAK'S FIRST BIG INNOVATION



One of the French-built RTG Turboliners speeds across the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern diamonds at Rondout, Ill., on a run from Milwaukee to Chicago in February 1978.

**T**he French-built RTG Turboliners, delivered in two batches, were Amtrak's first big news splash, with two 5-car train-sets debuting in 1973 on the Chicago–St. Louis run. A slightly negative side effect was that they displaced an early innovation Amtrak made in November 1971, with trains running *through* Chicago between Milwaukee and St. Louis. The Turboliners, in my opinion, never got the respect they were due. They were the

first new passenger cars for Amtrak. In 1975, four more sets arrived, allowing for Turbo service from Chicago to Milwaukee and Michigan points. The trains weren't without mechanical problems, especially when they were new, but they were bright inside, swift, and the customers loved them. That they were fixed consists which couldn't easily be expanded to accommodate more business was one factor in their ultimate demise.



An RTG Turbo northbound from Chicago nears Rondout on the Milwaukee Road main line in July 1976. If a Turbo was unavailable, a train of conventional cars, sometimes with dome coaches, would substitute.



In 1976, U.S.-based Rohr Industries built seven similar RTL-model Turbo trains for New York state. Contrasting with a French RTG Turbo at the right, a Rohr train, just in from California, stands at Amtrak's Brighton Park shop, 5 miles southwest of Union Station at the former GM&O coachyard site. A Brighton Park employee told me it had arrived.



## WHEN AMTRAK RAN ALCO PAs



D&H 18 keeps company at the Milwaukee Road's Western Avenue shop in Chicago with Amtrak E9 407. But for my momentary "mental blackout," I could've run the Alco back and forth as several MILW shopmen had just done. At least I had the sense to have my picture taken next to that distinctive PA nose!

In summer 1975, railfans across the country were in for a reunion with the beloved Alco PAs of the Delaware & Hudson, whose four ex-Santa Fe units were handled, one at a time, by Amtrak between Albany-Rensselaer, N.Y., and the Morrison-Knudsen shop in Boise, Idaho, where they were rebuilt into "PA4" units. They were to power the New York State-funded New York-Montreal *Adirondack* on the D&H portion of its run. A friend in our operating department gave me a heads-up that D&H 18 would be arriving in Chicago on the *Empire Builder*. The unit was cut in behind the Amtrak power, however, so I decided to go see it at the Milwaukee Road's Western Avenue shop, home to our E units serving on Milwaukee trains and the

*Empire Builder*. Upon arrival, I saw George W. Hockaday, a D&H road foreman of engines, supervising some enthusiastic MILW hostlers as they took turns running the Alco back and forth on a lead track. Soon Hockaday leaned out the cab window and asked me, "Sir, are you next? Wanna take her for a spin?" I didn't want to wreck that beautiful machine, so I said, "No thanks!" I've regretted that decision ever since!

I've never been big on locomotive cab rides, but I did want to see the PAs again, so I wrote to Marv Davis, D&H's chief road foreman of engines, and got permission to ride in the cab of a PA on the *Adirondack* from Rensselaer to Montreal. I chose to ride in autumn, and it was a spectacular experience.



At Whitehall, N.Y., on my October 1976 north-bound *Adirondack* ride, there was time to step down from D&H 17's cab to photograph our train, which north of Albany-Rensselaer included an Amtrak ex-Wabash dome coach.





## GLIMPSES OF THE CORRIDOR



Northeast Corridor variety is on display at the engine terminal next to Philadelphia's 30th Street Station in October 1976. E60s 966 and 957 stand out amid several black Amtrak GG1s.

Over the years I made many trips to Amtrak's headquarters in Washington for various reasons, and I enjoyed seeing the changes that were happening in the Northeast Corridor. The railroad went from a Penn Central property to Amtrak ownership, so, unlike in the rest of the country, passenger trains were king there. It was remarkable to see the venerable ex-PRR GG1s survive all the way through the decade, highlighting the equipment variety.



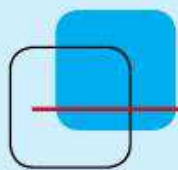
A Metroliner crosses over at Bowie, Md., in December 1977. Developed by the PRR and several suppliers, the multiple-unit cars would be succeeded by locomotive-hauled Amfleet consists, then by today's Acela trains. It was always fun to spend some time on the Corridor with my camera when at Amtrak headquarters on business.

The Gs' longevity was due in part to the tendency of their intended replacements, the General Electric E60 motors, to derail at high speeds. Amtrak brought in two locomotives from Europe for testing. One, a Swedish Rc-4a designated Amtrak No. X995, would be one of the most influential locomotives ever on the Corridor. This little engine packed the power of a big GG1, and it would prove to be the sire of Amtrak's 54 AEM7 units that would last until 2016.



Swedish Rc-4a demonstrator X995, on loan for testing and shown south-bound at Baltimore in October 1976, was the precursor of the successful fleet of AEM7 electrics built by Swedish firm ASEA and America's EMD.





## A CHANGE IN DIESEL POWER

**A**mtrak's first new diesel road power, the EMD SDP40F, was a personal favorite. Introduced on the Chicago–Los Angeles *Super Chief* on June 22, 1973, the six-motor “cowl” units were long and powerful, and they were the very face of Amtrak during the early years. Basically a freight locomotive with steam generators, they unfortunately are best known for their short service lives owing to being involved in several minor derailments. Some railroads banned them, although studies never pinpointed the exact cause of the problem; in fact, similar F45 models had long careers hauling freight on the Santa Fe and Burlington Northern.

One time at a meeting in Washington, one of our sales reps asked an executive from the operating department, “What’s wrong with the SDP40s? Can’t we fix them?” His answer was rather curt: “There’s nothing wrong with the SDPs that good track wouldn’t cure!” With an attitude like that, it’s no wonder some roads started banning the big units from their property. Let’s just say that general track conditions on many freight roads in the 1970s were less than top-notch.

Amtrak had to address the loss, though, and its answer was the F40PH, a shorter, four-axle unit with head-end-power equipment providing electricity to the train for lighting and climate control. It was the go-anywhere, pull-anything locomotive, and it was just what Amtrak needed. Numerous commuter agencies, VIA Rail Canada, and other passenger roads also lapped up the popular F40, which came to be *the* passenger diesel of its era and still serves many carriers, though not Amtrak.

Gil Reid, a noted railroad artist, devoted Pennsylvania Railroad fan, and personal friend, painted F40s for a dozen Amtrak corporate wall calendars starting in 1974. He could nail an F40 from any angle better than any other artist. Referring to their dependability and ubiquity, he once told me, “You know, these engines are the Pennsy K4 of our day!” That was quite a compliment coming from a PRR fan!

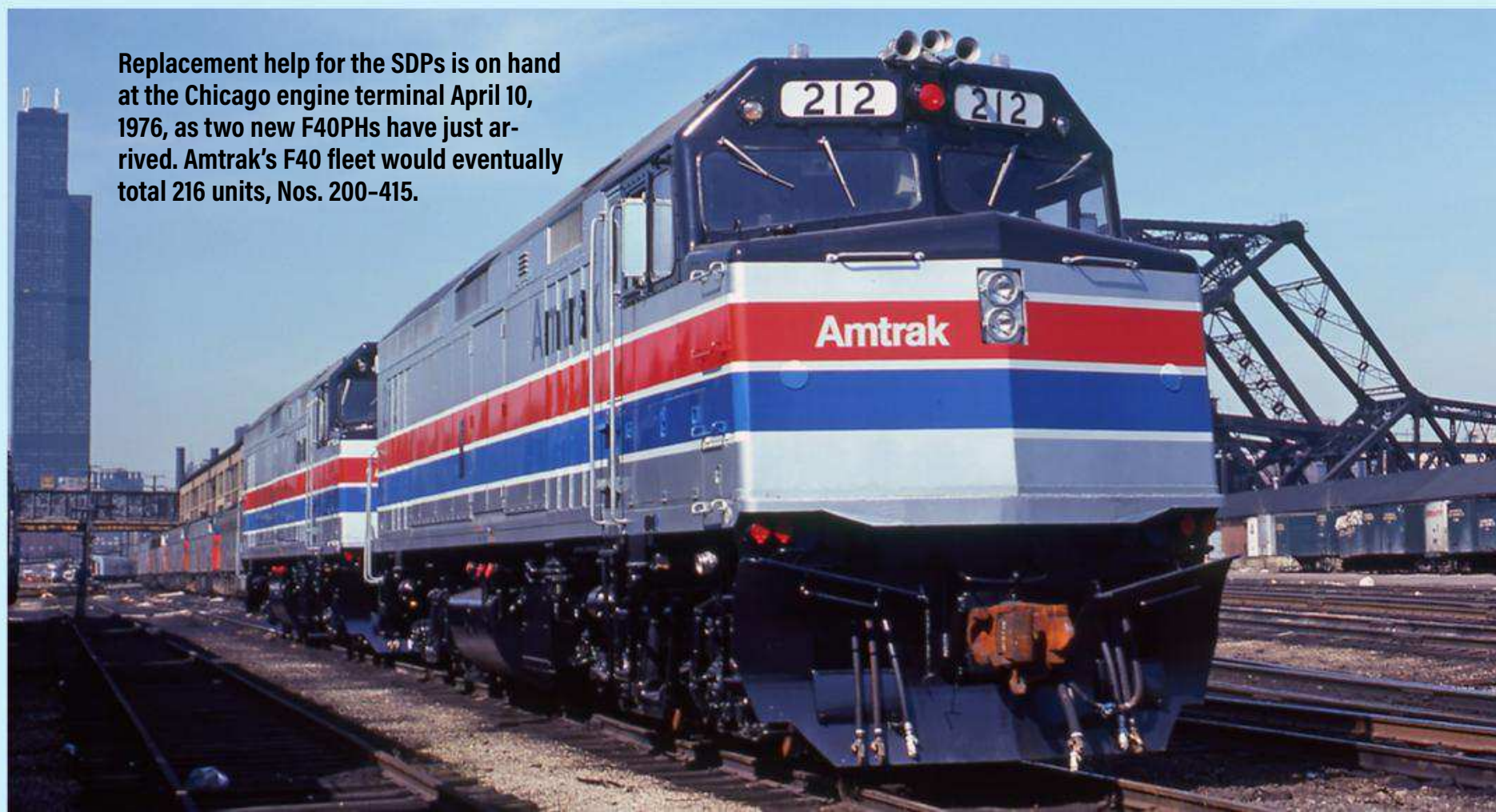


SDP40F 596 and a sister lead train 40, the New York-bound *Broadway Limited*, out of Chicago Union Station in November 1975. Amtrak received two orders totaling 150 SDP40Fs, Nos. 500–649, during 1973–74, but by the early 1980s their Amtrak careers were over.



During their brief service life, the SDP40Fs could be found coast-to-coast on virtually all long-distance trains and many short-hauls. In November 1974, the Florida-bound *Silver Star*, behind SDPs 549 and 548, makes its first station stop behind diesels at Alexandria, Va., having come from New York to the nation’s capital behind a GG1.

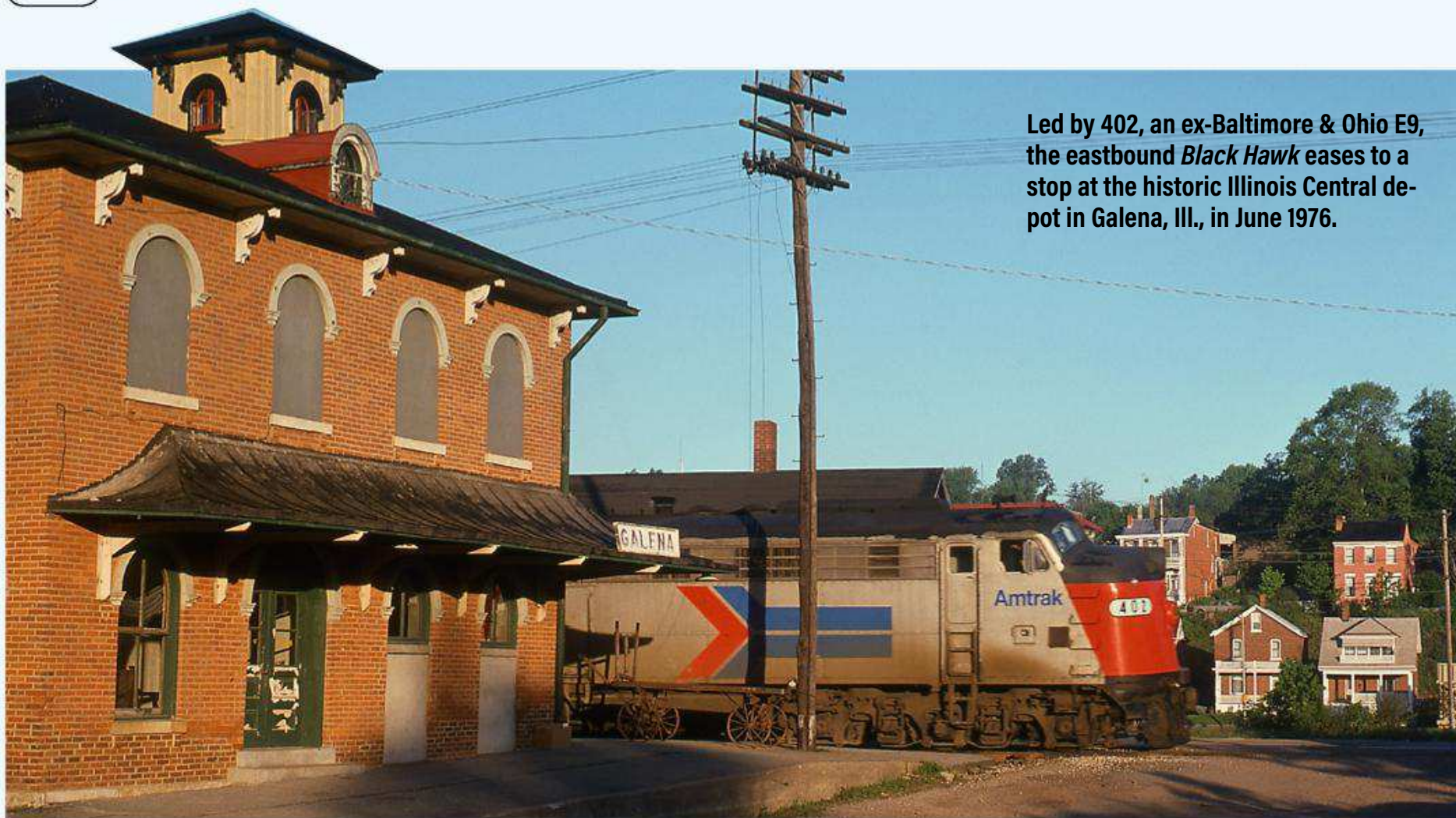
Replacement help for the SDPs is on hand at the Chicago engine terminal April 10, 1976, as two new F40PHs have just arrived. Amtrak’s F40 fleet would eventually total 216 units, Nos. 200–415.







## THE BLACK HAWK, MY SHORT-DISTANCE FAVORITE



Led by 402, an ex-Baltimore & Ohio E9, the eastbound *Black Hawk* eases to a stop at the historic Illinois Central depot in Galena, Ill., in June 1976.

**T**he *Black Hawk*, a state-supported train under section 403(b) of the Amtrak legislation that operated between Chicago and Dubuque, Iowa, beginning in 1974, was my favorite short-distance train during the late 1970s. The schedule, typical for many such trains, was into the big city in the morning and back to the hinterlands in the evening. Although well-suited for day trips for shopping or afternoon baseball games in the Windy City, the schedule did not allow a full business day there, and that was a weakness. The train's charm was in its rural northwest Illinois service area, with enthusiastic, grass-roots support from Rockford, Ill., and the friendly Illinois Central Gulf train crews. For railfans, the variety of equipment Amtrak assigned to the *Black Hawk* was another attraction.

Initially, the train utilized Budd RDCs, a rarity in Chicago, and then Amtrak's former-Chicago & North Western 1950s intercity bi-level coaches. Then came my favorite *Black Hawk* makeup, two ex-NYC round-end coach-observation cars bracketing a lounge car. Railfans nicknamed it the "Dubuque Crusader" after the Reading Company's 1937 train, whose five-car consist had a round-end obs car on each end to eliminate the need for turning at terminals. (The "shape" of the train inspired another nickname: "Silver Sausage.") When large groups were scheduled out of Rockford, the train also utilized ex-Santa Fe Hi-Level coaches. The *Black Hawk* later got Amfleet cars, which it carried until it was discontinued in 1981.

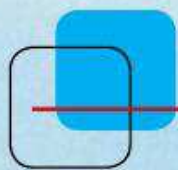
**The *Black Hawk* heads into the setting sun west of Perryville, Ill., nearing Rockford 6 miles ahead on a July 1976 evening. A single E8 is in charge of a three-car *Crusader*-type train with a round-end observation car on each end.**



In October 1975, three RDCs pass Amtrak's main Chicago coach yard as they deadhead from Brighton Park into Union Station, where they will reverse direction and depart as the *Black Hawk* to Dubuque.



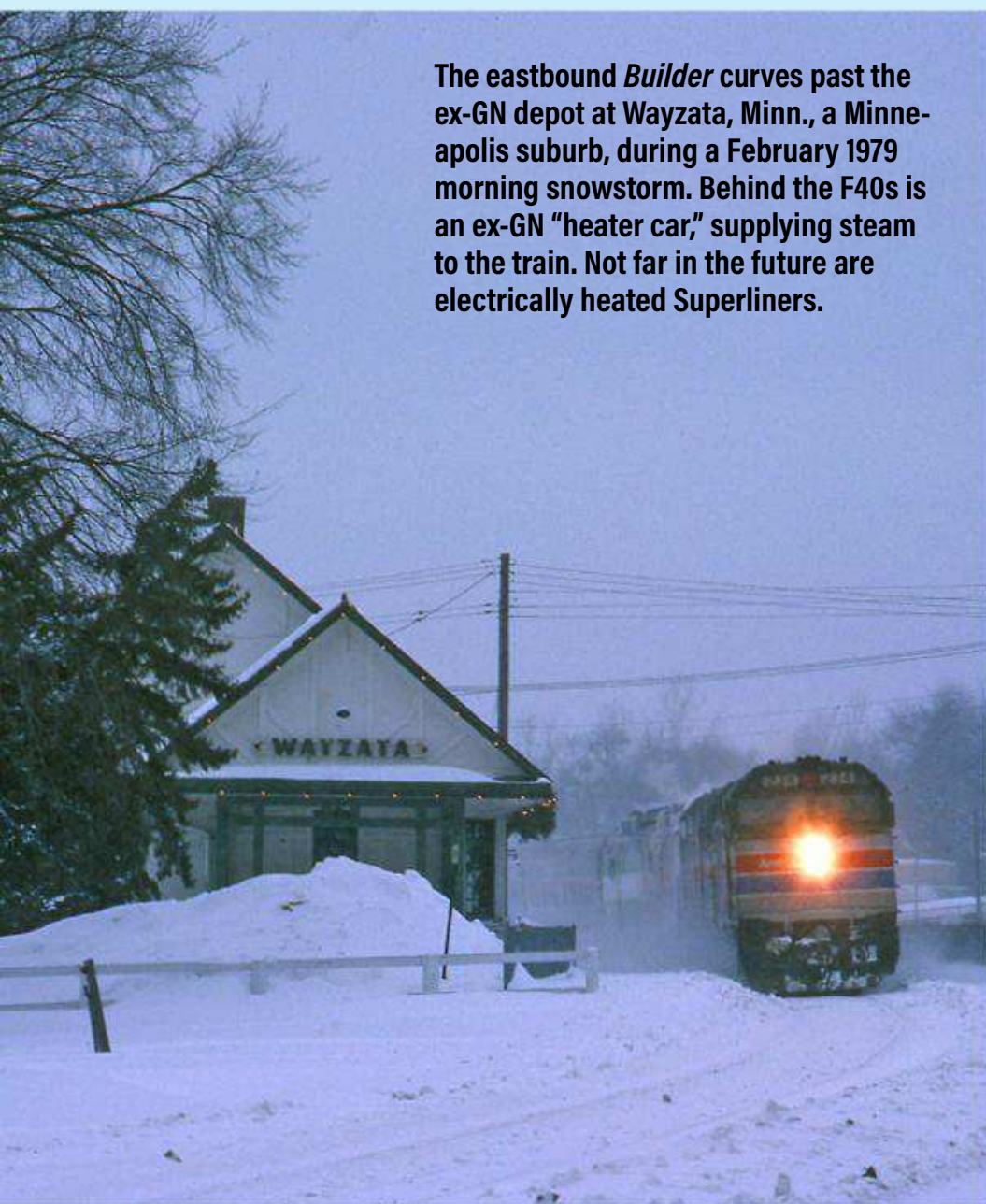




## THE EMPIRE BUILDER, MY FAVORITE LONG-DISTANCE TRAIN



Glacier Park, Mont., is an important stop for the *Empire Builder*, whose two new SDP40Fs are stopping at the GN-built depot on June 12, 1975.



The eastbound *Builder* curves past the ex-GN depot at Wayzata, Minn., a Minneapolis suburb, during a February 1979 morning snowstorm. Behind the F40s is an ex-GN "heater car," supplying steam to the train. Not far in the future are electrically heated Superliners.

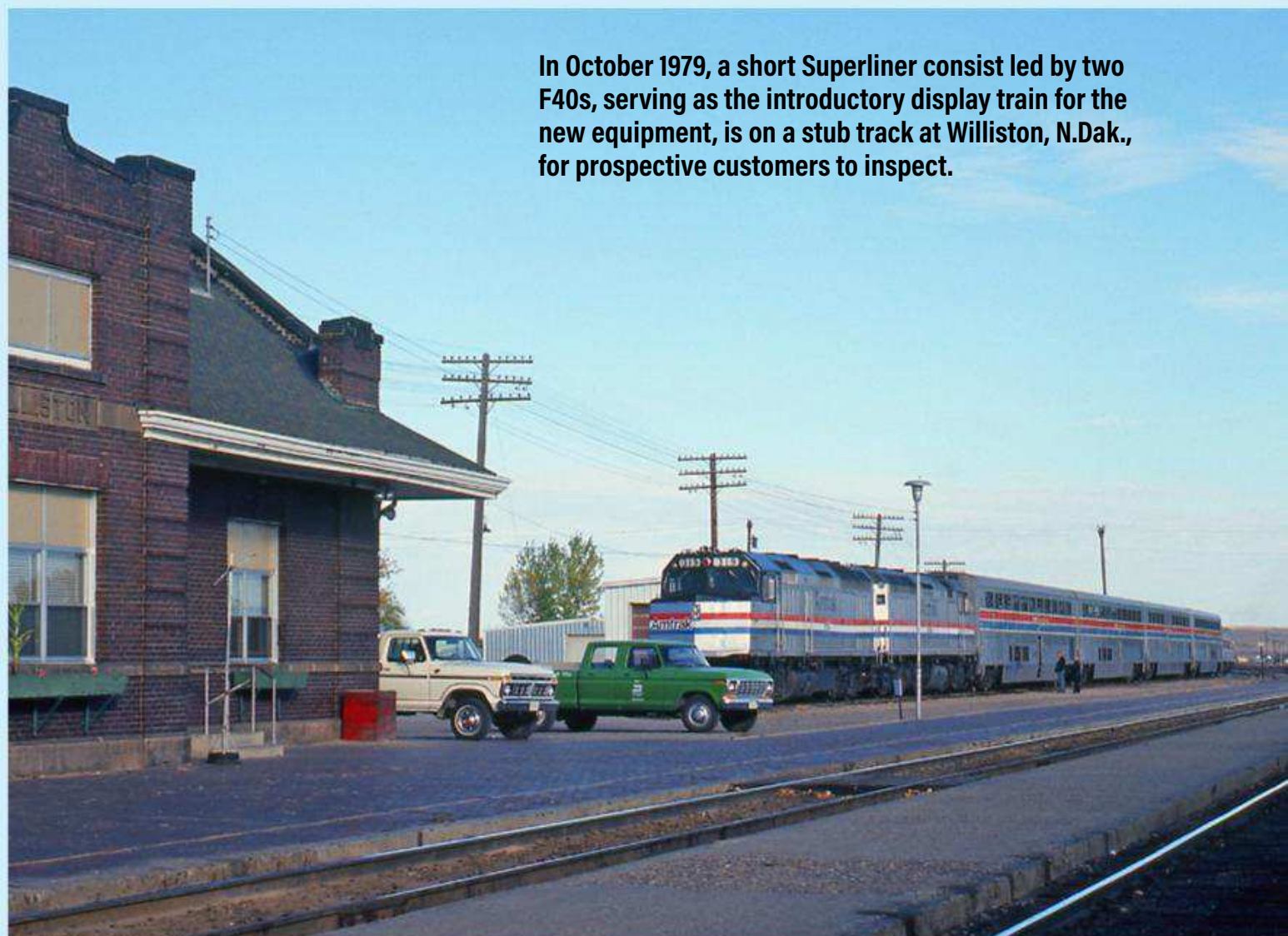
I was glad to be assigned to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area during a big transition time for the *Empire Builder*. Launched by the Great Northern in 1929, the famous Chicago–Seattle/Portland train carried on after the Burlington Northern merger. Amtrak retained the *Builder*, but immediately shifted it from the former CB&Q between Chicago and St. Paul to the Milwaukee Road in order to serve the large city of Milwaukee.

When I moved to the Twin Cities in 1978, the *Builder* was still a steam-heated domeliner, but the following year Amtrak's new Superliner cars began to appear, and the service would be the first western long-haul train to be converted. In October 1979, Amtrak ran two display trains on the *Builder*'s route. The first ran from Chicago to the Twin Cities, and the second from there to Seattle. At each station, the train lingered for a few hours to allow local citizens to inspect the new equipment. I felt privileged to be a participant in the launch of these cars. I never felt Amtrak had done enough to publicize the rollout of the Amfleet cars in 1975, but they did it big for the Superliners. The train would transition from an E-unit-hauled domeliner to having new F40s plus a steam-heating generator car in front of the traditional cars (as at left) to a Superliner consist.

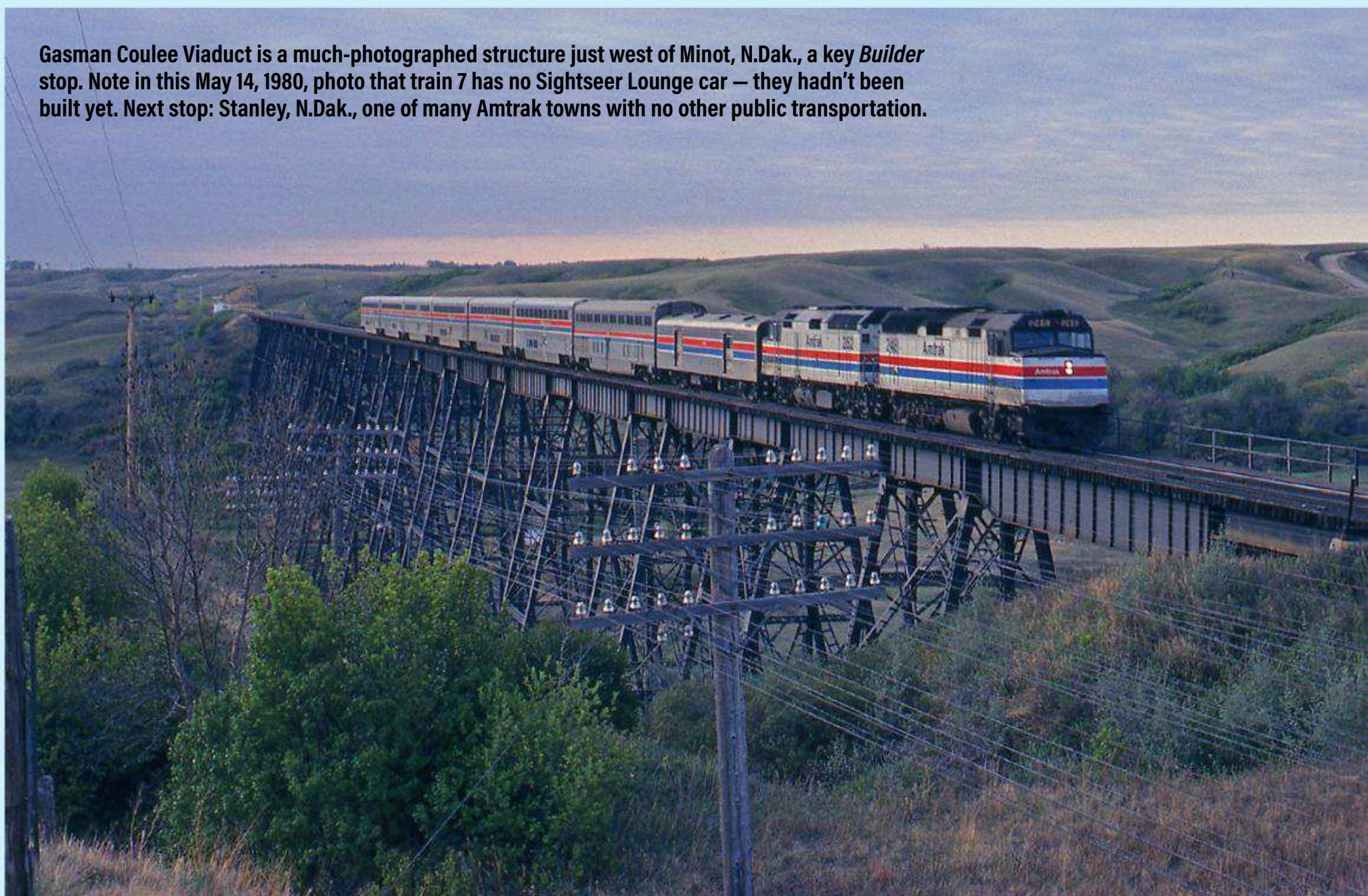
Also in 1979, travel agent Gayle Schroeder, from Winner, S.Dak., attended an Amtrak seminar that I conducted in Sioux Falls. One year later we were married, and we'll mark our 38th wedding anniversary in August 2018. It all happened because the 1970s were the best years to be at Amtrak! **I**

DENNY HAMILTON, who left Amtrak in 2000, served several subsequent employers in sales, including Kalmbach Publishing Co. He retired as Marketing Manager for a Milwaukee advertising agency. This is his fifth article in *CLASSIC TRAINS*.





In October 1979, a short Superliner consist led by two F40s, serving as the introductory display train for the new equipment, is on a stub track at Williston, N.Dak., for prospective customers to inspect.



Gasman Coulee Viaduct is a much-photographed structure just west of Minot, N.Dak., a key *Builder* stop. Note in this May 14, 1980, photo that train 7 has no Sightseer Lounge car — they hadn't been built yet. Next stop: Stanley, N.Dak., one of many Amtrak towns with no other public transportation.

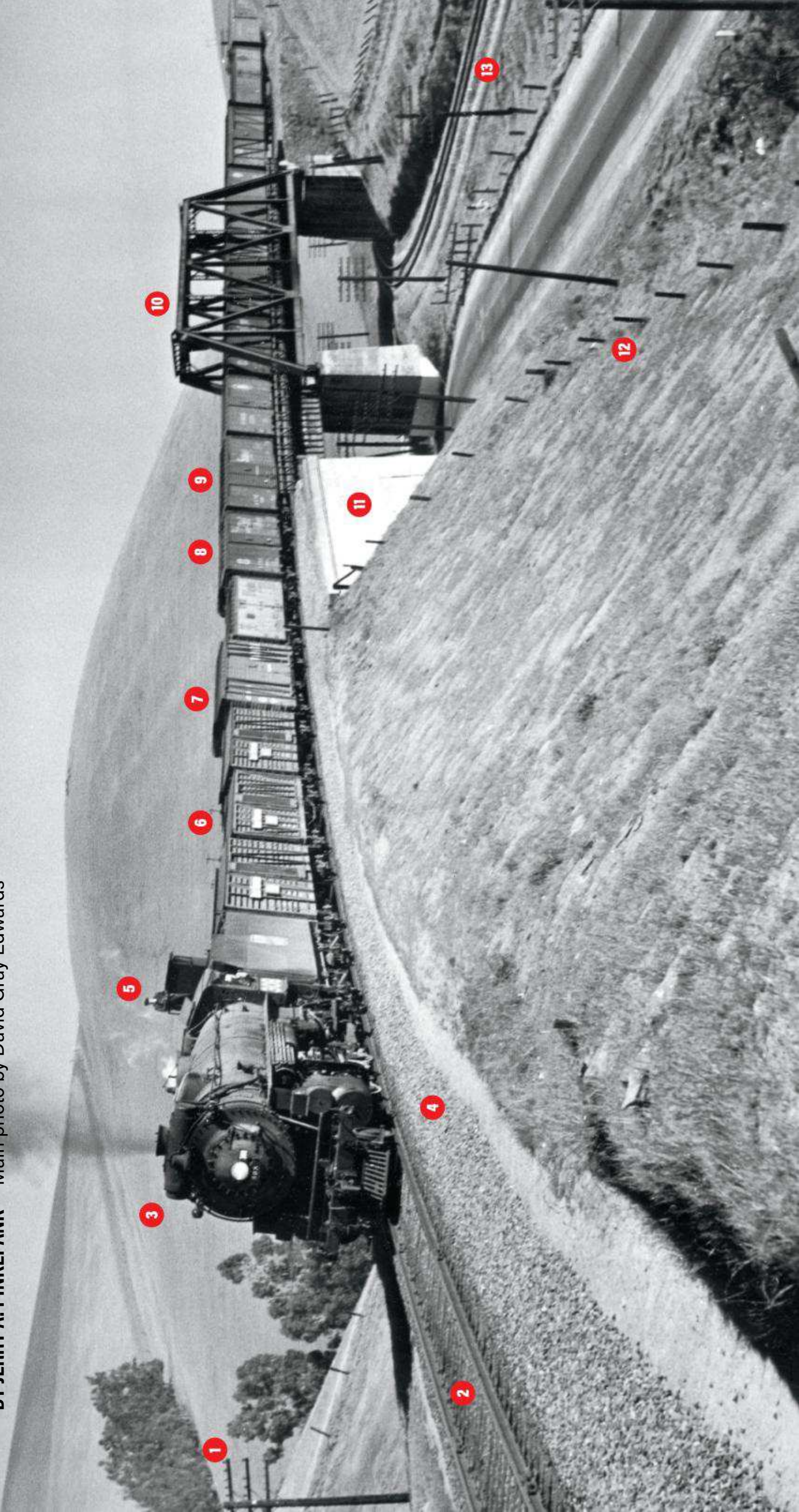


What's in a Photograph?

# Western Pacific freight on Altamont Pass

A USRA heavy Mikado labors toward a famous California summit, circa late 1940s

BY JERRY A. PINKEPANK • Main photo by David Gray Edwards





### Western Pacific's Salt Lake City–

**Oakland, Calif., main line** opened in 1909 as part of the Gould system that included the Missouri Pacific, Rio Grande, and Wabash in an attempt to create a transcontinental system. MP-D&RGW-WP were successful in competing with Union Pacific-Southern Pacific between St. Louis, Kansas City, and the San Francisco Bay Area. A major boost in WP traffic came with the opening of the Inside Gateway connection to Great Northern at Bieber, Calif., in 1931. Also, the opening in 1934 of the Dotsero Cutoff in Colorado allowed a fast connection with the Burlington Route at Denver, which meant more Chicago gateway traffic used the Gould roads west of Denver. Oroville, Calif., 200 miles east of Oakland, was where the Salt Lake and Inside Gateway traffic was combined, with Los Angeles traffic interchanging to the Santa Fe at Stockton, 90 miles east of Oakland, and Bay Area traffic continuing via Altamont Pass and Niles Canyon. This Oroville–Oakland train is approaching Altamont, where the rear-end helper will be cut off.

#### 1 Pole line

A multi-crossbar pole line was a sure indicator of a main line in the days before microwave use. The poles often carried commercial telegraph lines in addition to railroad telephone and Morse code lines and sometimes signal circuits as well.

#### 2 Superelevated curve

To counteract centrifugal force, the outside rail of a curve is elevated above the inside rail. In the era of this photo, curve rail wear was generally greater on the high rail, and it was the practice to transpose the rail when wear on the high side reached limits, placing the former low rail in the high position. After 100-ton-capacity cars became common in the 1960s and curves were still balanced for passenger-train speeds, the problem of excessive wear on the low rail arose, and railroads began to lower the superelevation, especially as passenger trains were eliminated.

#### 3 2-8-2 No. 308

One of the 12 standard locomotive designs developed by the U.S. Railroad Administration, which controlled the railroads during and for 15 months after World War I. Built at Alco's Schenectady, N.Y., plant in 1919, cylinders 27x32, drivers 63 inches, boiler pressure 190 PSI, tractive effort 60,000 lbs., Elesco feedwater heater added 1934, converted to oil fuel 1938, brakeman's doghouse added 1947, engine last used January 1953, scrapped in December.

#### 4 Full-crib, wide-shoulder ballast section

Reflecting WP's high engineering standards in this era, this is the ballast section that would normally be used today for continuous welded rail. WP was taking no chances with sun kinks. Full crib means the space between the ties is filled to the top for the full length of the tie — many roads in this era peaked the ballast in the center of the tie and left the tie ends bare.

#### 5 Brakeman standing ahead of doghouse

Many railroads used doghouses on their road freight engines, often because engineers did not want trainmen in the cab and negotiated agreements to that effect. On WP, doghouses were the exception, probably for territories where the brakemen might still be going over the car tops to club down brakes. This brakeman may be preparing for the arrival at Altamont.

#### 6 Three Great Northern stock cars

These cars have doubtless come via the GN-WP connection at Bieber, Calif. Though not usually thought of as a livestock originator, GN had 2,045 stock cars in 1950. The truss rod under the middle car indicates a wood underframe, but in this case it would be a composite frame (steel center sill, wood side sills) because all-wood underframes were barred from interchange in 1940. Note the brake wheels sticking up; a wooden brake club could be easily inserted in these to wind down the brakes if the engineer

called for it by whistle signal. A preferred practice to avoid this was to stop and turn up the retainers on a number of cars, which allowed the brake pipe to be recharged on a long descent.

#### 7 Wabash single-sheath auto boxcar

Probably an empty returning to the Chevrolet plant in Oakland; boxcars with their frames exposed are called single-sheath cars because there is only the layer of wood that forms the lining of the car and no outside layer. The white stripe on the door indicates the car is equipped with Evans auto loader racks and is thus a specialized car in assigned service; pools of such cars were contributed to by roads participating in auto traffic and moved independently of the normal interchange rules.



**Evans auto-loading equipment enabled a 50-foot boxcar to carry four autos, two of them on movable racks, and two on the floor.** <sup>Evans</sup>

#### 8 Santa Fe 40-foot boxcar

Probably a lumber load returning via Bieber from a loaded merchandise move off a point on the Santa Fe to the Pacific Northwest.

#### 9 Santa Fe auto boxcar

Note the Evans loader white stripe; car is likely in the same pool as the Wabash car in item 7.

#### 10 Through truss bridge

The truss spans SP's Niles Canyon line, with a deck plate girder bridge over Altamont Pass Road. The wood plank railings indicate a bridge walkway and conceal our view of whether these are open-deck or ballast-deck bridges. Walkways are critical for trainmen to get to problems that develop en route such as hot bearings, dragging equipment, or sticking brakes, but in this era some roads skimped on them since trainmen could usually go over the car tops if there was no walkway. When access to car tops was removed starting in 1966, some railroads had to speed up walkway-installation programs.

#### 11 Concrete abutment

This one wraps around because of the geometry of the road crossing. On the opposite end, the pier also serves as the abutment, an unusual case. The fill approaching a bridge is called the "bridge dump" and is often a place where settlement occurs, requiring extra ballast, but judging by the ballast section this dump is firm.

#### 12 Right-of-way fence

A right of way wider than the usual 100 feet was needed here to accommodate the fill on which the railroad was built. Maintaining the fence is the responsibility of the railroad and is usually required by law outside of cities to keep livestock from straying onto tracks.

#### 13 SP Niles Canyon line

A secondary line for SP in later years, it was originally part of the first transcontinental railroad, connecting with Central Pacific at Sacramento. It was partly replaced in that role, mostly for passenger trains, by the route that included a ferry across Carquinez Strait in 1869 and then downgraded to a local role in 1930 with the opening of SP's Carquinez Straits bridge. SP abandoned the line between Tracy and Niles in 1984, although tourist line Niles Canyon Railway operates the western 8 miles.



Ingles Color Classics

# EMD'S



EMD's "mighty mite" shows its heft as BN No. 88, ex-CB&Q 9143, hauls 10 hoppers of sugar beets at Great Western's Sterling, Colo., mill in fall 1970; built in 1940, the unit was retired in 1980. The distinctive profile of an SW1 is obvious with NYC 574 at Kankakee, Ill., in November 1961 (right). NYC had the most SW1s, 96, and while it stabled many in big cities, the compact units also served outposts such as Cairo, Ill.; Bay City, Mich.; and Fostoria, Ohio.

BN, Hol Wagner; NYC, J. David Ingles





# MIGHTY MITE

Unique in profile and sound, this switcher model found many buyers during its 15 years of production

BY J. DAVID INGLES • Photos from the author's collection



**Y**ou could turn a profit by operating an entire 42.5-mile railroad with a single 600 h.p. SW1. Ike W. Duffey did just that with the Central Indiana Railway and its only diesel, 1949-built No. 1, between Anderson and Lebanon for more than a decade beginning in 1951 [“Running a Railroad for Fun,” Spring 2013 CLASSIC TRAINS]. The CIR was a hobby for Duffey, as his salary as president and general manager of the road was \$1 a year. That a railroad of such length relied

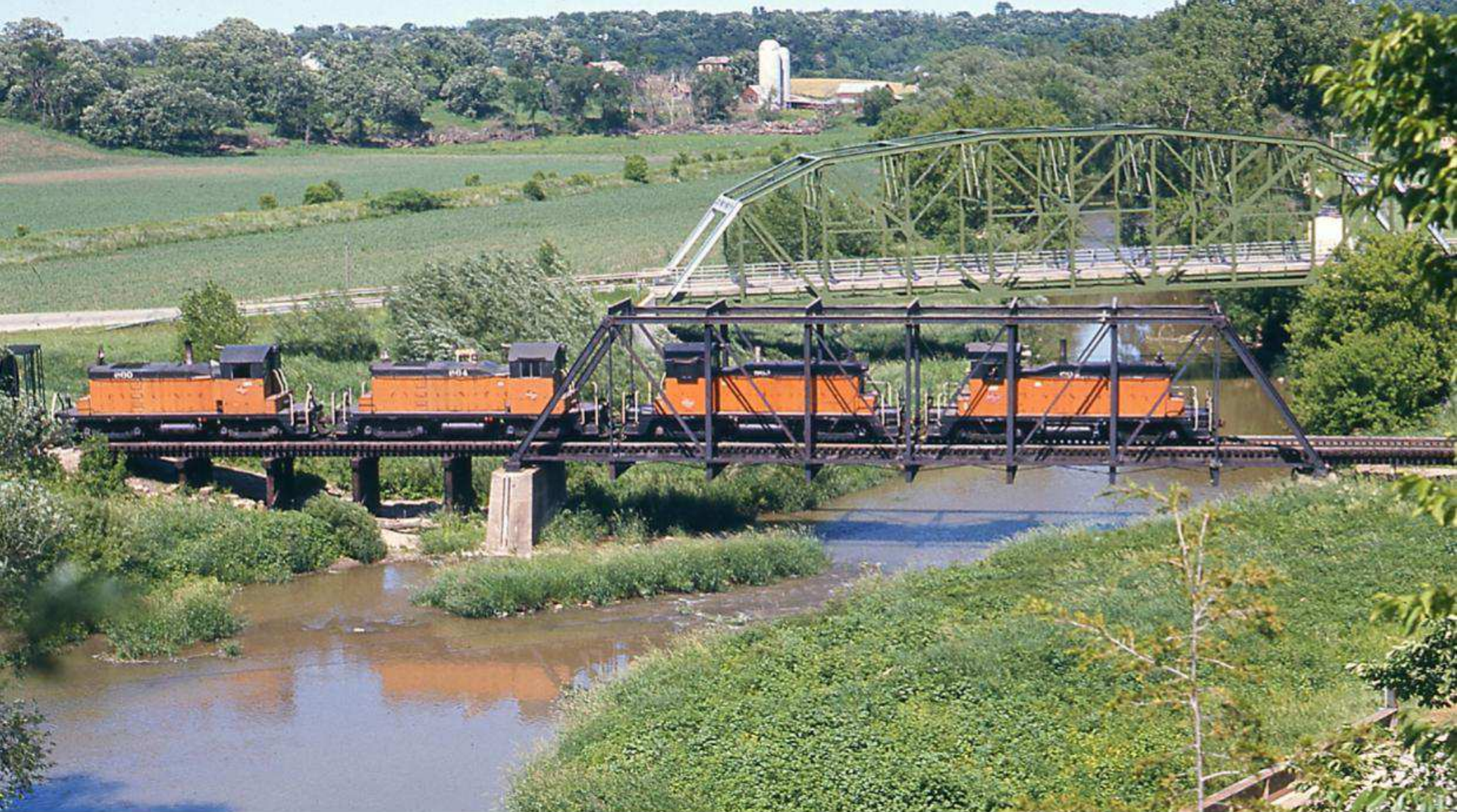
on a single locomotive was unusual but far from unique. Many Class I carriers used SW1s on light-rail branches, mostly singly but also with two or more in multiple. Generally, though, Electro-Motive’s “mighty mite” labored in freight yards, toiled behind the fences of various industries, prowled rural branch lines and short lines, or hopped about at passenger terminals and coach yards.

The SW1 was easy to recognize, both by eye and ear. Like other early Electro-Motive switchers, it measured just shy

of 45 feet in length, but the SW1’s shorter hood gave it a stubby yet jaunty profile. Big “porches” fore and aft, with “seats” on which a tired ground crewman might rest between tasks, enhanced the effect. Below the radiator grille on the front, that “seat” hid the sandbox; behind the cab was the battery box. Enhancing their jaunty appearance, most if not all SW1s also sported their bell atop the hood up front.

Protruding up from the hood was a single exhaust stack, instantly separating the SW1 visually from its twin-stack





**Milwaukee used SW1s in multiple on its 105-mile La Crescent-Austin secondary line along the Root River in southeast Minnesota; crews called them "Pups." The line had weight-restricted track and bridges, exemplified here as an eastbound quartet makes a side trip on June 14, 1976, to Preston, base for the 50-mile Isinours-Caledonia branch. MILW's 25 prewar SW1s came in the 1620 series, later were 900s, then 800s.**

Terry Norton

Electro-Motive Corp. predecessors as well as the contemporary 1,000 h.p. NW2. (Produced during 1939–49, the NW2 would be succeeded by the 1,200 h.p. SW7, 9, and 1200, all with 12-cylinder 567 engines. EMC merged with Winton Engine Co. to become General Motors' Electro-Motive Division in 1941.)

An SW1's 6-cylinder 567 was rated at 600 h.p., and the throaty roar of that compact prime mover gave out a unique,

memorable, and easy-to-identify sound. It was almost a "chug." Larger than a GE 44- or 70-tonner but smaller than a typical 124-ton 1,000/1,200 h.p. switcher, the 99-ton SW1 fit nicely in between, and it was the longest-lived model to grace the catalog of the era's diesel king, EMD.

The SW1 sold 661 units, succeeding EMC's 600 h.p. Winton-engine series in early 1939 and bowing to railroading's inevitable horsepower increases in Novem-

ber 1953, when La Grange's last SW1 went to Cleveland Quarries Co. Restrictions during World War II temporarily eliminated its availability as EMD focused on FT road freight locomotive production, another factor being that 6-cylinder 567s were in demand for Navy vessels. No SW1s were sold new in Canada. The lone SW1 to be exported went to the private Bosque de Chihuahua railroad in Mexico, notable for also owning



**No SW1s were sold new to owners in Canada, but some worked there. Wabash kept two at CN's Detroit River ferry slip in Windsor, Ont., where 102 and idler flats pose in July 1960 (above). Built in 1939, it and 101 were sold in fall 1961 to dieselize Mississippi's Bonhomie & Hattiesburg Southern. Pere Marquette 11, built in 1942, has factory paint in March 1961 at C&O's Erieau (Ont.) Lake Erie coal dock 14 years after the merger.**

Both, J. David Ingles



Fairbanks-Morse road-switchers. The NW2, meantime, sold 1,119 units in the U.S. and 24 to Canadian National.

At home almost anywhere, the SW1 sold to 35 Class I railroads, roughly two dozen short lines, and a like number of industrial pikes, according to EMD's 1957 *Product Reference Data*. Scores of SW1s are still at work, and well over a dozen reside at museums, several of which operate them. In fact, the quantities of SW1 resales, second (and beyond) owners, and preservation examples are too numerous to comprehensively cite here.

### THROUGH THE YEARS

The SW1 enjoyed strong sales from the get-go, many customers just continuing their practice of buying EMC Winton 201A-engined switchers. EMD's new 567 prime mover was the big difference, and the SW1's best year was 1940, with 123 sold. Interestingly, total SW1 production was split almost exactly in half each side of the year 1944, when none were built. In 1942, EMD turned out 54, and in 1943 it shipped just one, to Florida's Broward County Port Authority. In 1945, SW1 deliveries totaled 11.

The first SW1, with builder's number 755, appeared in late 1938, beating its big brother NW2's birth by a couple of months. It would be one of seven SW1 demonstrators (below), and would go to Inland Steel in 1940.

Slight changes in appearance occurred on the SW1 during its decade and a half of production. After mid-1950, the front

| ELECTRO-MOTIVE SW1 DEMONSTRATORS               |            |   |
|--|------------|---|
| Bldr's No.                                     | Month/Year | Next owner  |
| 755  | 12/38      | Inland Steel 51 (in 1/40)   |
| 804  | 2/39       | Southern Pacific 1000   |
| 905  | 8/39       | Central of Georgia 1  |
| 906  | 9/39       | Western Pacific 501   |
| 911  | 9/40       | Great Lakes Steel (Mich.) 11  |
| 3896   | 10/46      | Manufacturers Junction 7 (Cicero, Ill., in 1/53); ex-EMD plant switcher 700 |
| 15557  | 6/51       | Scullin Steel (St. Louis) 6; ex-No. 152                                     |
| Source: 1957 EMD <i>Product Reference Data</i> |            |   |



As seen from the tower at the Alton & Southern-Louisville & Nashville crossing in East St. Louis, Ill., May 27, 1960, Chicago & Eastern Illinois 96, one of the road's five 1942 SW1s, heads east on the former St. Louis & O'Fallon, a 9-mile pike that went to the Black Eagle coal mine.  
M. L. "Monty" Powell



The owner's name fills the hood of 1946 Chattanooga Traction Co. SW1 No. 4, working on the city's north side June 1, 1966. A subsidiary of Southern's CNO&TP, CT also had an SW9. The line dates to CT's 1917 start as the electric Dry Valley branch to Red Bank, Tenn. CNO&TP absorbed CT in 1969. Southern's 8 SW1s and 3 of Central of Georgia's 4 wore the same livery.  
J. David Ingles



Pennsy's 85 SW1s, classed ES6, were the second-largest SW1 fleet, all but one (from 1942) built during 1946-50. PRR assigned some to remote, light-duty jobs such as with 5950 at Columbus, Ind., on June 3, 1964. Typical of Pennsy, the ES6s were in scattered number groups.  
J. David Ingles





It's two SW1s for the price of one on October 14, 1963, at Hammond, Ind., as Chicago District Electric Generating 3 (later Commonwealth Edison of Indiana) works at the State Line power plant while EJ&E 220 rolls west on the J's Lakefront Line to U.S. Steel's South Works in Chicago.

J. David Ingles

| LARGEST SW1 FLEETS                              |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| Railroad  | Qty. | Notes |
| New York Central*                               | 96   | 1     |
| Pennsylvania*                                   | 85   |       |
| Elgin, Joliet & Eastern*                        | 27   |       |
| Milwaukee Road                                  | 25   |       |
| Boston & Maine*                                 | 24   |       |
| Republic Steel                                  | 22   |       |
| Union Railroad                                  | 22   |       |
| Chicago & North Western                         | 20   | 2     |
| Burlington Route*                               | 20   | 3     |
| Inland Steel*                                   | 20   |       |
| Illinois Central*                               | 19   |       |
| Rock Island*                                    | 18   |       |
| Baltimore & Ohio*                               | 16   | 4     |
| Southern Pacific                                | 15   |       |
| Great Lakes Steel*                              | 14   |       |
| Lackawanna                                      | 11   |       |
| Wabash  | 11   |       |
| Missouri Pacific*                               | 10   |       |
| Quantities are SW1s bought new.                 |      |       |
| * = Also owned pre-SW1 EMC switchers            |      |       |
| Notes:  |      |       |
| 1. Plus 7 by subsidiary Chicago River & Indiana |      |       |
| 2. Plus 1 by subsidiary Omaha Road (CStPM&O)    |      |       |
| 3. Plus 3 by subsidiary Fort Worth & Denver     |      |       |
| 4. Plus 6 by subsidiary B&O Chicago Terminal    |      |       |

cab windows facing the hood were rectangular, vs. earlier units whose window tops followed the cab's curved roofline. Later SW1s had twin sealed-beam headlights. Early SW1s sported a short exhaust stack, which quickly gave way to EMD's taller switcher stack. The hoods on early SW1s joined to the cab in a two-stage taper, succeeded by a single taper. SW1 production held steady, with 34 built in 1953, the model's last year, about half the number turned out in 1939, its first. Sales in 1939 were to 18 customers (all but 3 being railroads), vs. 10 in 1953, all industrial firms buying single units other than 14 for Boston & Maine and 12 for Chicago & North Western.

### WHO HAD THEM, WHO DIDN'T

The two giants of the era, New York Central and Pennsylvania, together wound up with just over one-quarter of total SW1 production. U.S. Steel's Elgin, Joliet & Eastern's fleet of 27 was a distant third, as evidenced by the list (left) of the 18 largest original fleets. Of the 35 Class I roads that acquired new SW1s, the smallest was 408-mile Georgia & Florida, which took three in 1950. Did your favorite Class I buy any new SW1s? Among those that did not were Santa Fe; Chesapeake & Ohio; Chicago Great Western; Rio Grande; Grand Trunk Western; Kansas City Southern; Katy; Minneapolis & St. Louis; Northern Pacific; Frisco; and Union Pacific, plus Alco

loyalists Delaware & Hudson; Gulf, Mobile & Ohio; and New Haven; and steam holdout Norfolk & Western. A few of those had earlier EMC switchers, including Santa Fe, CGW, GTW, M&StL, and NP. Atlantic Coast Line did buy one SW1 but soon sent it to the Richmond Terminal. (Frisco did have an SW1, No. 10, buying ex-BN 77 in 1978 to replace a GE 45-tonner on Blakeley Island in Mobile, Ala.; SLSF 10 rejoined the BN, as No. 70, in the roads' 1980 merger.) C&O inherited Pere Marquette's two SW1s, 10 and 11, when the roads merged in 1947. Both units stayed in their original PM blue and yellow into the 1960s, and today No. 11, as C&O 8401, works at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore.



Black was initially IC's color for all diesels except passenger cab units, but this SW1, at Chicago in May 1970, got the new 1967 livery. It was among six IC sold to Columbus & Greenville; IC also sold five to Rock Island.

Craig Rutherford



# STEEL PLANTWORKERS

Speaking of the B&O, nearby tourist line Wilmington & Western in Delaware has two SW1s, one built in August 1940 as B&O 208 (later 8408). It worked on the same branch that now is the W&W. Rebuilt in 2016, it is W&W's regular power. W&W also has ex-Lehigh Valley 114, built in February 1940 but now stored.

Other Class I's besides ACL had, for whatever reason, only one SW1. Soo Line kept its 320 in a one-stall shed in Oshkosh, Wis.; today it is at Duluth's Lake Superior Railroad Museum. Others in the one-SW1 club were Erie; Seaboard; and Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis.

The SW1, like other builders' diesel switchers, was popular with steel companies and their affiliated common carriers, evidenced by U.S. Steel's EJ&E and Union Railroad (Pittsburgh) and three steel firms all being on the large-fleet list. Replacing steam power with diesels helped clear the air around smoky and dirty mill complexes.

## ANCIENT SURVIVORS

Remarkably, the second, third, and fourth ex-demonstrators, all from 1939, still exist. SP 1000, the oldest, is at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento; Central of Georgia No. 1 (which did not wear the "tuxedo" colors, being sold to an Atlanta-area short line, is at the Georgia State Railroad Museum in Savannah; and Western Pacific 501 is at the WP Railroad Museum in Portola, Calif. (WP also bought two new SW1s in '39).

In general, SW1s were disappearing from Class I rosters by the 1980s. Two new entities, Burlington Northern (1970) and Conrail (1976), inherited the model. BN got 25: CB&Q's 18 (1 of which was on subsidiary Fort Worth & Denver and also had been on Colorado & Southern); 5 of Great Northern's original 9; and 3 from

FW&D, including WWV 104 (below). One ex-Q unit had served on the Missouri & Illinois Bridge & Belt at Alton, Ill., but BN quickly sold it. BN retired its last 10 SW1s in 1983 and the system's last one, WWV 104, in 1984. Conrail inherited almost 200 SW1s, most from Penn

Central but also from Reading (which bought 9), Jersey Central (4), and LV (6). All were off the Conrail roster by 1984.

Similarly N&W, whose only diesel switchers were 40 Alco T6s from 1959, inherited Nickel Plate's two SW1s and Wabash's three youngest ones in the big



**These three steel firms together owned more than 8 percent of new SW1s. Clockwise from top: Republic Steel 300 works at Youngstown, Ohio, in June 1969; Great Lakes Steel 36 is at a "Downriver Detroit" mill in April '64; and Inland Steel 69, seen from a passenger train, toils behind the customary fence in East Chicago, Ind., in July '59.**

Republic, Ray Sabo; Inland and GLS, J. David Ingles



**Colorado's Great Western Railway, which ran steam late, bought SW1 No. 61 new in 1952, after two SW9s in 1951, then added two EJ&E SW1s, 231 and 233, which became GW 62 and 63. Obviously at least one wore the J's "road colors" of green and orange, as unrenumbered 231 works with GW 61 at the short line's Loveland headquarters in the 1960s.**

Hol Wagner



**Tiny cab initials reveal this SW1 is on Walla Walla Valley, a BN subsidiary in Washington. Originally a 14-mile interurban, it came under NP control in 1921 and dieselized with Alcos in 1950. WWV 104, built in 1939 as Fort Worth & Denver 602, replaced another SW1, BN/WWV 77 (built in 1941 as GN 5103), circa 1973. WWV quit in 1985.**

Hol Wagner





**Boston & Maine dolled up its 14 postwar SW1s, intended for branchline service, in road colors, with big, angled engine-number boxes atop the front corners of the hood. No. 1120 crosses the Connecticut River bridge leaving Woodsville, N.H., for Wells River, Vt., in October 1962.**

J. David Ingles collection



**Burlington wasn't alone in adorning the compact hood with a slogan (opposite page and page 46); witness C&NW 1268, one of the road's 12 SW1s of 1953, parked in May 1962 at Rhinelander, Wis., on the route of the Chicago-Ashland *Flambeau 400*. C&NW also had 8 SW1s from 1942.**

Robert C. Anderson

1964 merger. N&W repainted the NKP units and two from Wabash; one of the latter, formerly N&W 3110, is at the Minnesota Transportation Museum in St. Paul.

### COLORFUL, OR NOT

An interesting aspect of SW1 fleets was their color, or lack of it. In diesel-dom's early years, Henry Ford's motto for

his Model T auto — "You can have it in any color you want as long as it's black," or words to that effect — was true for almost all yard diesels. Several SW1 owners, Lackawanna, L&N, Soo, and Wabash among them, eventually fielded road units in colorful liveries but stuck with black, or a simple solid color (e.g., B&O blue, Rock Island maroon) on yard en-

gines. Some roads "colorized" switchers after encountering visibility issues. Detroit, Toledo & Ironton was one. DT&I had two 1941 SW1s in black, but when they were rebuilt to SW8s in 1952, their color became the orange all DT&I diesels wore until GTW took over circa 1980.

Other SW1 buyers whose early black switchers changed to road colors included C&NW, GN, MILW, and B&M, New England's only new-SW1 buyer. Burlington applied "Everywhere West" and "Way of the Zephyrs" slogans to switchers as well as road hood units. NC&StL's lone SW1 wore maroon and gold as on the road's GP7s; it joined L&N's 5 SW1s in the 1957 merger. Monon had 3 SW1s, one from 1942 (sold in the 1950s but still extant in Indiana) and two from 1949, sold off before the 1971 L&N merger.

Passenger terminals and/or coach yards worked by SW1s, not necessarily exclusively, included Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis' Union Station; Central (IC) and La Salle Street (NYC, RI) in Chicago; and Memphis Union Station. Amtrak SW1s worked Washington Union Station in the post-Washington Terminal Alco RS1 era; Amtrak had 16 ex-NYC SW1s and still has one, No. 737, in service, at its Wilmington (Del.) shop.



# PASSENGER TERMINAL DUTY



The SW1 was ideal for passenger terminal work. Clockwise from left: Rock Island 538 pushes the *Rocky Mountain Rocket* consist toward Chicago's La Salle Street Station on November 4, 1961; NYC 676 is coupled to RI Aerotrain cars there in April 1960; two of St. Louis' Terminal Railroad Association's eight SW1s hostile head-end cars and the consist of the Wabash-Union Pacific *City of St. Louis* May 28, 1964.

All, J. David Ingles

## ONGOING PRESERVATION

Testifying to the design and durability of the EMD 567 prime mover and the SW1 itself is the fact that dozens of SW1s still exist, many operational. They serve short lines and museums, mostly, although Chicago commuter system Metra keeps two as shop switchers, both ex-Rock Island but built for Illinois Central.

An internet search reveals where and for whom many SW1s still toil, or shall we say entertain? Moreover, SW1 preservation continues. A case in point is B&M 1113, built in 1941 and sold circa 1960 to the FirstLight Power Resources utility to switch coal trains at the Mt. Tom Generating Station in Holyoke, Mass. Delivered in B&M's second switcher livery, black with four red stripes, the unit was painted solid yellow by the utility as No. 1849.

The Mt. Tom plant closed in 2014, but the unit has been saved and donated to the Berkshire Scenic Railroad Museum, which runs tourist trains out of North Adams, Mass. According to the Mass Bay Railroad Enthusiasts group, utility employee Neil Black and other volunteers, plus the firm clearing out the plant site, waged a campaign to save it. Last given mechanical work at Pan Am Railways' East Deerfield (Mass.) shop in 2013, the

unit is in good condition, and after an overhaul, is likely to haul BSRM trains.

In short, the saga of the SW1 continues. It is uncertain that they worked in all 48 contiguous states (they likely missed Nevada, at least), but the Alaska Railroad acquired four built in 1942 for the Army, Nos. 1201–1204, and they lasted into the mid-1960s. Dozens of Great Plains grain elevators employed hand-me-down SW1s, and some still do, although many

users have gone to larger units, and two SW1s, both now gone, are known to have emigrated to Canada. So let us salute EMD's "mighty mite": Long may it survive, whether to haul the public or quietly work for short lines or industries. ■

*J. DAVID INGLES, Senior Editor of CLASSIC TRAINS since its 2000 inception, draws on his large collection of slides to illustrate our "Ingles Color Classics" series.*



Mixed-train power: CB&Q SW1 9151 has halted for the crew's lunch stop at Donnellson, Iowa, 14 miles out of Fort Madison, on January 23, 1967. Train 77 will cover 65 miles to Bloomfield.

J. David Ingles



# The great Ancona



A year before the author's tale, Santa Fe U23B No. 6332 leads a mainline train west around the Ancona curve on January 1, 1977. The Pekin Branch is out of view to the right.



# standoff

HOW MISMANAGEMENT FROZE UP SANTA FE'S MAIN LINE

DURING A 1978 ILLINOIS BLIZZARD

BY ROBERT NICHOLSON • Photos by Joe McMillan

## **Ancona, Ill., a tiny unincorporated**

burg 6 miles southwest of Streator and 96 rail miles from Chicago on Santa Fe's Illinois Division, is where to this day BNSF's double-track "Transcon" main line makes a sharp curve. This is as a result of the railroad, building east from Kansas City under President William Barstow Strong in 1886, connecting to the existing Chicago & St. Louis to gain entry to the Windy City. The C&StL never got beyond Pekin, Ill., south of Peoria on the Illinois River, and the line south of Ancona became Santa Fe's only branch in Illinois. Ancona, it is said, takes its name from an Italian city.

Santa Fe's interlocking plant at Ancona, on the straight track northeast of the hamlet, controlled the entry to the Pekin Branch as well as crossovers between the two mainline tracks. This is the scene for our tale, about an operating fiasco in the face of a blizzard in January 1978. Many rank-and-file railroaders have long held a view of railroad brass along the lines of: "They are called management because they generally manage to screw things up." Two incidents from that era, when I was a train-service employee on the Illinois Division, help support this.

The winter of 1977-78 was the second bad one in a row





in central Illinois, and the late January '78 storm, which forced Santa Fe to clear the branch with a rotary snowplow, followed a similar event on December 11, 1977.

In that storm, which had heavy, drifting snow, I was up front on three units on a westbound drag freight out of Chicago's Corwith Yard, with the late Johnny Jacobs as engineer, and we were snared by a mismanaged event near Coal City that involved giving our lead unit to an eastbound with ill power. This led, 5 miles later, to the failure of our rear unit. Ultimately we dragged downhill and across the Illinois River into Chillicothe, milepost 130 and the old first division point, where we hit our 12-hour service limit.

That debacle was mild compared to one on Saturday, January 28, 1978, when another blizzard socked the Illinois Division. The track maintenance people were out in force, trying to keep the two-track, CTC-equipped main line clear. Roadmaster "Red" Peterson was out with them, but they were rapidly losing the battle.

When No. 16, Amtrak's Houston–Chicago *Lone Star*, stopped at Chillicothe, Red climbed into the cab and rode to Ancona to help get trains moving.

Chuck Tanner, now a retired engineer, was a passenger-train fireman then, with engineer W. E. "Wee" Clark, since deceased. Tanner and several other firemen who hadn't been promoted had jumped at the chance to fill vacancies to fire on passenger trains. I was not among them, being on layaway in Chicago, which occurred when the promoted men were pulled up to fill depleted engineer ranks.

No. 16 left "Chilli" on the south main track. Chuck remembers passing, in the 34 miles to Ancona, *seven* eastbound freights parked on the north track, either out of crew time or almost so, with no way to get relief crews out to them. The power switches at Ancona had been lined for No. 16, and the roadmaster's last instructions to the dispatcher had been to leave the switches lined straight-through, and not to try to line them for crossover

moves under any circumstances.

What Red was unaware of, though, was that the trainmaster at Fort Madison, Iowa, end of the Illinois Division, was on the job doing what he did best, barking orders into a phone from the warm confines of his office to PBX operators up and down the line. Contributing to the upcoming stalemate was that a westbound off the Conrail connection at Streator had entered our south main track through a hand-thrown spring switch. On this train were engineer Darrell Yaley, now deceased, and conductor John "Wormy" Baintor. (His nickname's origin is lost to history.) To complicate things, the Conrail train's caboose had no radio communication.

The Amtrak train eased around the sharp Ancona curve and stopped for the red signal at the interlocking. Red Peterson descended from the cab and made his way to the switches, there finding Track Supervisor Dave Cuevas. Chuck Tanner remembers that after an extended





Just west of Ancona curve in the late afternoon on January 16, 1977, the caboose of 5659 East whooshes by an eastbound led by a pair of GP20s, 3167 in the front.

period, who should climb up into 16's cab but Mr. Cuevas, whose first words were to ask where Roadmaster Peterson was. The blizzard was so intense that the two men had walked right past each other, unaware of doing so in the blowing snow!

As 16 was sitting at Ancona's eastward red signal, the westbound off Conrail had pulled up to the westward red signal on the same track. The fact that the Conrail train was there at all, instead of waiting in the clear at Streator before entering the Santa Fe main line, was a mystery, since no one should've given it permission to leave until 16 had passed. Whatever the cause, the dispatcher, now faced with a dilemma of either his own making or on orders from the trainmaster barking over his shoulder, tried to line 16 through the Ancona crossover so it could go on east.

By this time, though, the interlocking plant was completely out of service, its switches full of snow and ice and the dispatcher unable to throw them either way. The blizzard was intensifying, and the

maintenance-of-way people were forced to take temporary cover to keep from freezing. East of Streator, 6 miles ahead, westbounds were backing up, unable to move because of the Ancona standoff. The mighty Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe had been brought to its knees.

### THE SOLUTION

After the Conrail train sat there for an extended period, Wormy, unable to contact anyone by radio, decided to make his way from the caboose to the engines to see what the problem was. After nearly an hour of fighting his way through the blizzard alongside the train, he finally crawled up into the lead unit, nearly frozen. Engineer Yaley and the head brakeman undressed him and put his wet and frozen clothes on the cab heater to dry them (and thaw him out). The rear brakeman remained on the caboose, still with no idea of what was happening and no radio contact, his last instructions being to "stay on the caboose and don't get off, under any circumstances!"

Out of the storm, then, came a flash of brilliance. The trainmaster told Wormy to return to the rear of his Conrail train and back it into the clear in Streator yard so 16 could get by. Any other time, and even with proper radio communication, this wouldn't have been a good move, but especially now, in the middle of the raging blizzard, it was impossible. Wormy informed the trainmaster of that, and that since he had nearly frozen to death walking to the engines, there was no way he was going to try returning to the rear end. This fell on deaf ears in the dispatcher's office; orders were orders, to be obeyed.

Once again the trainmaster barked his orders over the radio via the PBX operator at Streator, and once again Wormy re-

sponded calmly that, due to the severe weather conditions, he could not comply. The trainmaster became furious and told Wormy that if he did not return to the rear of his train and back it into Streator, he would no longer work for the Santa Fe. When Wormy responded once more that he could not do that, the trainmaster fired him on the spot. Whether he ordered him off the train or not is unclear.

I was at home in Lacon, Ill., 7 miles or so north of Chillicothe, when the blizzard hit. I did not fully understand how bad the storm was until friends who gave my daughter a ride home from a church function in nearby Sparland advised me to not retrieve our automobile at the church until the blizzard was over. In fact, not far from Streator a woman froze to death while trying to walk one-half mile from her stranded auto to her home. This was not a storm to be trifled with!

Eventually the blizzard blew over, Santa Fe's MofW forces were able to get the Ancona switches to operate, and the railroad began to move again. Wormy got his job back when there was no way to provide anyone to take his place, and Santa Fe engaged in a scramble to replace crews "dead" on the hours of service, some of whom had been stuck on their trains in excess of 24 hours.

I finally made my way to Chillicothe to deadhead on one of the formerly stranded westbounds to Fort Madison. En route, I stopped briefly at the old Track Inn restaurant next to the depot in Chilli and bought two Hershey bars to eat on the way. In the engine cab, I found a deadheading engineer, the late Cletus Morris, who had been stranded on his train for more than 24 hours with nothing to eat. I gave him my chocolate bars. The standoff was finally resolved when the blizzard subsided, and section men could clean out the switches at Ancona and at Streator so the eastbound *Lone Star* could cross over, run past the train off Conrail, cross back over in town, and, after his Streator stop, meet the queue of westbounds holding back east of Streator. All of this took a considerable amount of time as the railroad scrambled to find relief crews. Once Amtrak 16 was out of the way, the Conrail connection train

**The blizzard was so intense that the two men had walked right past each other, unaware of doing so in the blowing snow!**

could proceed. It did so, and sure enough, once into the yard at Chillicothe, the crew ran out of their 12 hours of service time. ■

ROBERT NICHOLSON, who still resides in Fort Madison, Iowa, has had two previous *CLASSIC TRAINS* bylines, both also about his Santa Fe experiences, in Summer 2002 on the Pekin Branch and in Spring 2016 on "ragtime engineer" Harry Roland.



# Getting



Our Chicago-San Francisco Bay Area conveyance was the *San Francisco Chief*, and a half-hour switching and service stop at Clovis, N.Mex., allowed me the opportunity for my first off-train photographs. The train was led by five Alco PAs (one of them a PB unit).





# my. kicks in

# 1966

A transcontinental train trip was the perfect graduation present

BY KEN HOJNACKI • Photos by the author

**I**n 1966, I graduated from Central High School in Auburn, in upstate New York 25 miles west of Syracuse, and my mother, wanting to visit my sister and her family in northern California, conceded to making the trip by train as a graduation present to me. I dug out my 1956 *Official Guide* and began plotting routes. I obtained more current timetables from several railroads, and the decision was difficult. Eventually it was decided that we'd take the New York Central from Syracuse to Chicago (no real choice on that leg) and the Santa Fe to the San Francisco area. Our route home would be on the *City of San Francisco*, which ran on the Southern Pacific from Oakland to Ogden, Utah, then Union Pacific to Omaha, and the Milwaukee Road to Chicago. From the Windy City, we again had no choice but the NYC to Syracuse.

Our adventure began at Syracuse on the late evening of Tuesday, July 5, when we boarded NYC 27, the *New England States*, on which we had Sleepercoach 27's double bedroom D for the 670-mile overnight ride to Chicago. This was my first time sleeping on a train, and the rocking and wheel noise took getting used to.

My parents, I recently learned, borrowed money for us to make this trip. For Syracuse–Chicago each way on NYC, we paid a \$12.60 double Sleepercoach room charge plus coach fare. Our total rail fare was \$311.03, and the Pullman rooms west of Chicago each were \$55.05.

We arrived at Chicago's La Salle Street Station next morning at 8:40, but didn't linger long enough for me to get any pho-





Santa Fe F7 306 and Louisville & Nashville E7 790 (above) have arrived on Tracks 4 and 3, respectively, L&N power on the combined *Humming Bird-Georgian* running through on the Chicago & Eastern Illinois. Our *San Francisco Chief* (inset) would leave from Track 5. The bumping posts at Dearborn Station forced tight photos of locomotive front ends.



# Dearborn Station delights



The third of Santa Fe's three custom Fairbanks-Morse H12-44TS units shuffles cars for outbound trains, including flatcars of mail containers.



A string of commuter coaches, still lettered Wabash despite the 1964 merger into N&W, rest during the day (middle photo, above) next to C&EI E7 1100, in off the *Danville-Chicago Flyer*. Later, depot owner Chicago & Western Indiana's RS1 258 (above) is next to Norfolk & Western GP40 1347, a freight unit that will pull the Wabash cars to Orland Park. C&WI ran its own commuter trains, to Dolton, until 1963.



Earlier, C&WI 258, one of the terminal road's 12 RS1s, hostles cars off Monon's *Thoroughbred* from Louisville. Except for the Santa Fe, C&WI did the depot switching for all Dearborn tenants, whose ranks also included Erie Lackawanna and Grand Trunk Western.



# My 6,135-mile graduation present



As we left Joliet, our first station stop, I photographed through our bedroom window another new railroad to me: Gulf, Mobile & Ohio, whose RS1 No. 1103 was switching the north end of GM&O's Joliet yard, against the backdrop of the large American Institute of Laundering building.

tos as we headed right for Dearborn Station to await the mid-afternoon departure of Santa Fe train No. 1, the *San Francisco Chief*.

Once at Dearborn, I was impressed by the building but even more so with its upper-level waiting room with big windows looking out over the platforms and bumping posts just below. My mother was used to dealing with her "little boy's" penchant for disappearing when trains were around, and I did that several times, wandering the platforms taking slides and movies without being challenged.

Dearborn offered a wide range of seven railroads, all new to me. Sitting idle next to a string of coaches, still lettered Wabash two years after that road's merger into Norfolk & Western, was Chicago & Eastern Illinois E7 1100. Alco RS1 258 of depot owner Chicago & Western Indiana was shunting Monon cars around, after

which it rested next to N&W 1347, a GP40 freight engine. The unit, whose lack of steam heat production was not a factor in summer, would pull those Wabash coaches on the line's only commuter train, to suburban Orland Park, Ill.

The real action for me started in early afternoon as Santa Fe began assembling our *San Francisco Chief* for its 3:30 p.m. departure, and the combined *Super Chief/El Capitan*, which left at 6:30. Santa Fe 542, one of the road's three customized Fairbanks-Morse H12-44TS units (for "terminal switcher") it assigned to work at Dearborn, was busy tying on the mail container flats and baggage cars, which made our train much longer than the platform. Trains of the Monon and Chicago & Eastern Illinois (with run-through Louisville & Nashville units), as well as the *San Francisco Chief*, arrived during the afternoon, but the cramped space be-

yond the bumping posts allowed only allowed tight "nose shots" of the units leading the trains.

Our 2,537-mile Santa Fe ride began after we boarded our Pullman, line No. 18, a 10-roomette/3-double bedroom/2-compartment car on Dearborn's Track 5, and the porter led us to our Bedroom A. This was much more luxurious than our NYC Sleepercoach, with a bench seat for the lower berth and room to move about. On departure we passed through industrial areas of Chicago, a few suburbs, and into the big city of Joliet for our first stop. En route, we passed a lot of railroad sights new to me, and as we left Joliet I photographed through our bedroom window Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Alco RS1 1103 switching in its yard, against the backdrop of the American Institute of Laundering. I also glimpsed GM&O's GP30s in their white-and-black scheme.





During a half-hour stop at Clovis, N.Mex., I hiked to the front end, where soon our five Alcos recoupled to the train. On an adjacent track, Baldwin yard goat 2292 was switching mail container flats, while on another, motor car M160 and 1940-built round-end coach 3197, to be connecting train 25 to Carlsbad, waited for us to leave.



Our PAs left a trail of thick black Alco smoke as we climbed toward Tehachapi Loop, prompting me to try a quick shot through our car window. I'd discovered open Dutch doors, and when shooting a passing Santa Fe freight, I also discovered how dirty such a spot can be!

## OPPORTUNITY AT CLOVIS

Whereas the *Super Chief/El Capitan* took the "traditional" Santa Fe route from Kansas City to central New Mexico via Dodge City, southeastern Colorado, Raton Pass, and Albuquerque, our train ran via Amarillo, Texas, where our path joined that of U.S. Route 66, in this year of 1966 giving me a double meaning for "getting my kicks." (We'd also crossed Route 66 in Joliet, Ill.) I basically missed our late-evening Kansas City Union Station stop, where in this era, I would learn, train No. 1 customarily swapped its F units from Chicago for a set of Alco PAs. As we left our mid-morning stop at Amarillo, I spotted Santa Fe 2-10-4 No. 5000 on display west of the depot.

At Clovis, N.Mex., we had a 31-minute stop, so while my mother searched for snacks near the depot, I went to the head end to watch the switching action. Bald-

win DS44-1000 No. 2292 was adding mail cars to our train, and on an adjacent track to the north sat Brill motor car M160 and a round-end coach-observation car, which would go south 184 miles to Carlsbad as connecting train 25. (Today the M160 is at the Museum of the American Railroad in Frisco, Texas.)

Our road engines had moved forward before I could get a photo of them on our train, but after the mail cars were switched, back they came — five, yes *five* Alcos, in an A-B-A-A-A formation. They recoupled to our train and the blue flag went up. After shooting several pictures, I decided it was time to head back to our room, and as I walked east I noticed that most of the doors had been closed, with the porters watching from the Dutch doors. One porter at an open Hi-Level coach door was waving violently at me, so I hurried over and got on. We started

up almost immediately after the door closed. I received a tongue-lashing from my mother, who had no idea where I was and who was fearful because the conductor was unsympathetic to her concerns. I tried to justify my late arrival by noting the train was going nowhere with the blue flag still in place on the lead unit, but that didn't help calm down my mother. I was more careful after that.

The service on the Santa Fe was superb, and the meals were wonderful. The breakfast menu offered a choice of juices, fruit, or cereal; ham or bacon with eggs, griddle cakes, or French toast with apple sauce and bacon; toast or muffins; and a beverage — all for \$2.05. The crews were friendly, except for the nurse. After awakening in southern California, we had breakfast in the diner, and on the way back to our room, I noticed the upper half of both Dutch doors in the first vesti-





During our brief stop in Bakersfield, Calif., I was able to shoot a Santa Fe Alco "Alligator" and tri-level auto racks carrying Ford Mustangs.



A friendly SP operator in Oakland's 16th Street Tower introduced me to the controls of his interlocking plant, but an attempt to obtain permission to enter the Oakland engine terminal was rebuffed, though I did shoot backlit GP35 6641 passing the Oakland yard tower with a freight.

bule to the rear of the diner were open. I grabbed my cameras from our room and headed back there. The doors were still open! Riding down and around the Tehachapi Loop was exciting, until the nurse came by and scolded me about opening the doors, which I told her I hadn't done. She must have said something to the conductor, as he arrived shortly. We talked a bit, and he just smiled and said to be careful.

The PAs had been really smoking things up on the east side of the Loop, and I now wonder if any of those units were the ones I rode behind years later on the Delaware & Hudson. I didn't record their Santa Fe numbers, so I'll never know for sure. Further along, we met an eastbound Santa Fe solid perishable freight train in a cloud of brakeshoe smoke, and I tried a photo.

Bakersfield yard was full of Alco "Alli-

gators," long-nosed RSD15 locomotives in blue and yellow, and I spotted a string of open tri-level auto racks full of brand-new Ford Mustangs. We didn't linger at Bakersfield, and as we went on up California's flat Central Valley, dotted with oil well pumps, our engineer really notched out those PAs. I don't know how fast we were going, but it was impossible to peer ahead out the Dutch door and still be able to breathe. What fun!

After stops at Fresno and Stockton, all too soon we were in Richmond, where Santa Fe trains ended their long journeys and connecting buses to Oakland and San Francisco were available for passengers. Yes, the first part of my Western rail odyssey, all 3,207 miles of it, was over.

#### A BIT OF BAY AREA ACTION

Not having a car available, my California railfanning was limited. We did

take the obligatory cable-car ride, and finally I convinced my sister and brother-in-law to drop me off at Southern Pacific's 16th Street station in Oakland while they and my mother enjoyed sightseeing elsewhere. I watched what I am sure was train 102, the *City of San Francisco*, loading for its eastbound run, a precursor of our way home a few days later. The train was a mixed consist of SP gray and Union Pacific yellow cars with red-nose SP cab units on the point.

Thanks to an agreeable operator, I spent some time in the 16th Street Tower by the depot. However, my attempts to gain access to the roundhouse area across the way met with stiff opposition — so much for the "Friendly SP."

All too soon, in a few days we were on our way east on the "City" (Bedroom A, car 1025) for the 2,258-mile return to Chicago. I was hoping to see the Sierras





# Heading home on the 'City' and the 'States'



From trackside, here are period views of the trains author Hojnacki rode home: The *City of San Francisco*, nearing Ogden, Utah, behind SP PAs on May 20, 1967, when this train was their last assignment; Milwaukee Road first 104, lead section of the combined *City of San Francisco/Los Angeles*, passing the Western Avenue station in Chicago on August 26, 1967, on the last lap into Union Station; and NYC's 17-car *New England States*, racing east at sunset out of Toledo on July 7, 1963.

Three photos, J. David Ingles







**I had insufficient time to exit for pictures at Ogden Union Station, where our *City of San Francisco* changed from Southern Pacific to Union Pacific, but I did get this Dutch door shot looking south along the platform showing, among other items, a blue-flagged UP business car.**

and their famous snowsheds, but after our Sacramento stop just before supper-time, by the time we passed Auburn and started climbing into the mountains, the sun was setting. When I awoke next morning, we were speeding away from the Great Salt Lake toward Ogden. There, I was only able to grab a couple of Dutch-door shots before we headed east on UP.

After an early breakfast, I grabbed a seat in the dome car and enjoyed that wonderful view of trains and mountains. While the food was good on the SP and UP, it didn't compare to the wonderful fare we had on the Santa Fe. And on this train, there was no Dutch-door riding.

As we came into Cheyenne, Wyo., I got my first glimpse of UP's gas-turbines and a weary looking FEF-3 class 4-8-4, No. 833, now displayed at Ogden Union Station. Oh, how I wanted to get off the train for a closer look, but we were on

our way again in no time.

As our train sliced through the fields of western Nebraska in the afternoon, the sky began to change from blue to green to black, and then rain started. Car headlights on the parallel highway were barely discernible through the gloom. Only later did I realize we might have been passing through a severe storm area, but we felt safe in UP's hands.

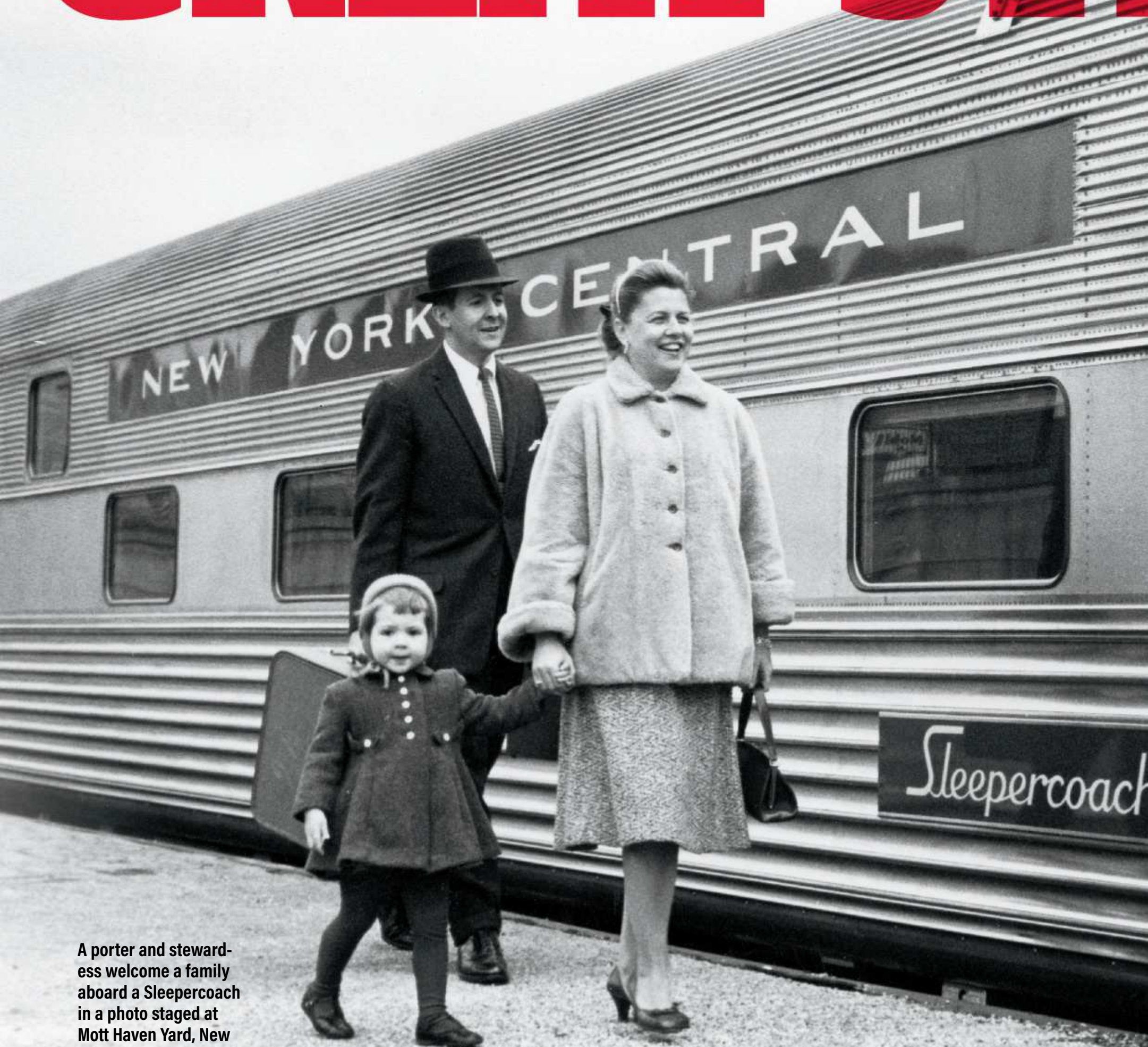
I slept through the wee-hours change at Omaha from UP to Milwaukee Road, and we arrived in Chicago Union Station at midday. We immediately transferred to La Salle Street Station to await the mid-afternoon departure of NYC 28 (Car 28, Bedroom F), the *New England States*, again our train back to Syracuse. As we walked up the platform, we passed the Railway Post Office on the *20th Century Limited*, which would leave a half hour after us. The car had an outside mail slot

for depositing letters, and I wished I had a postcard I could have sent to myself so I today could have a *Century* RPO cancellation, but alas, there was no time. The remainder of the trip home was uneventful, and so full of new memories from out west that I don't remember any details other than passing the steel mills around Gary, Ind., but the 6,135-mile, 18-state railroad adventure was a wonderful graduation present. Thanks, Mom. ■

*KEN HOJNACKI, a Madison, Wis., resident with his wife Shirley, is retired from the Wisconsin Division of Securities. A steam fan, he first worked with it at Rail City Museum in his native upper New York state. An avid New York, Ontario & Western fan, he's written several articles on it for various publications. He has had several bylines in TRAINS, but this is his first with us in CLASSIC TRAINS.*



# LAST HURRAH FOR THE GREAT ST



A porter and stewardess welcome a family aboard a Sleepercoach in a photo staged at Mott Haven Yard, New York. The car is one of four NYC leased from Budd. New York Central



# STEEL FLEET



In the late 1950s, New York Central looked to high-capacity sleeping cars in a final effort to bolster its fast-fading long-haul passenger trade

BY GEOFFREY H. DOUGHTY

New York Central's fabled "Great Steel Fleet" of passenger trains was in trouble. For decades the famous *20th Century Limited* and its many running mates had been the preferred choice for millions of travelers between New York/Boston and the Midwest. The long-haul limiteds were big business for the Central, but by the mid-1950s, as people increasingly chose highway and airline travel, this business was in steep decline. Beset by passenger deficits, NYC looked for ways to keep passengers on its trains and still earn at least a modest profit, leading the road to investigate sleeping cars of higher capacity than any it had been using. This effort culminated in 1961 when NYC sent a group of its 22-roomette sleepers to the Budd Company for conversion to 36-passenger "Sleepercoach" cars.

The first cars of this type, dubbed "Slumbercoach," had been delivered five years earlier in 1956 to the Burlington Route for use on its crack *Denver Zephyr* and had not only proven to be popular, but also financially successful. In their first 18 months of revenue service, the Burlington's four cars had accumulated more than 44 million miles and brought in total revenues exceeding \$1.35 million. Burlington calculated that the out-of-pocket break-even point would occur at 50 percent occupancy.





***Silver Siesta* was a Budd Slumbercoach built for Burlington's 1956 *Denver Zephyr*. On each side of its central corridor were 12 single rooms (staggered windows) and 4 double rooms; its 40-passenger capacity compared favorably with that of a typical 10-roomette/6-bedroom car.**

Roger Kemen



**A pre-production mock-up shows the two-level "nesting" configuration of single rooms in a high-capacity Slumbercoach-type car.**

CLASSIC TRAINS collection

Designed to carry 24 passengers in small single-occupancy "duplex" roomettes and 16 in eight not-much-larger double bedrooms (which were about the size of a standard one-bed roomette), the cars were intended to increase sleeping-car capacity from 22 persons (the maximum load for a standard 10-roomette/6-double-bedroom car) to 40 while simultaneously boosting traffic volume because of the considerably reduced fare for the smaller and more modest accommodations. The cars' success on the *Denver*

*Zephyr* prompted interest from the NYC, along with Baltimore & Ohio, Missouri Pacific, and Northern Pacific.

### SLEEPER EVOLUTION

The search for an alternative to the standard Pullman sleeping accommodation was not new. It began in the 1930s, a challenging time for the railroads. The then-standard sleeper was Pullman's 12-section/1-drawing room "heavy-weight" car that had a capacity of 27 persons. These "section sleepers" had both lower and upper berths. As the lower berth was more popular, there were often empty "uppers," meaning that Pullman lost the revenue for the accommodation and the railroads lost the rail fare. When Pullman could no longer sell space, an extra sleeping car had to be included in the train to provide additional lower berths. In the face of declining patronage, Pullman had to find a way of increasing utilization of as many berths as possible.

With the break-up of Pullman, Inc. into separate carbuilding and car-operating concerns after World War II, the situation changed. Pullman, which operated most of the nation's sleepers, was now owned by a consortium of railroads that wanted revenue from rail fares based on mileage, while Pullman depended upon space charges.

The Slumbercoach was actually the product of a long process given momentum by Chesapeake & Ohio President

Robert R. Young's postwar attempts to resuscitate the declining coach and sleeping-car trade by boosting ridership and reducing associated costs. It was intended to be an answer to the problem of car capacity and, as such, part of a national debate about the American passenger train and whether it could be made into a profitable revenue provider.

As early as 1945, the Budd Company's vision was that of its founder, Edward G. Budd, who had commented that his firm's desire was to build cars for the "well-balanced, all-purpose consist of a train." The company proposed designs for three new types of sleeping cars, hoping to capitalize on the low-cost travel desires of the public while also increasing capacity. However, these were *proposals*, not actual car plans. Although these dream cars were never built, some of the designs were incorporated into Budd's postwar line of sleepers. What Budd called a "Siesta-Coach" was a combination of them all. The most appealing aspect, as far as the railroads were concerned, was that the Budd design maximized car capacity and thereby increased revenue.

Changes in the public's traveling tastes after the war were already being noticed, and carbuilder Pullman-Standard produced mock-ups of low-cost accommodations that could boost capacity while it continued to build sleeping cars with standard-size rooms. P-S called its car the "Slumbercoach."





## THE SLUMBERCOACH'S HIGHER CAPACITY AND SMALLER ROOMS ENABLED LOWER SPACE CHARGES.

Although it had staked a claim to the Slumbercoach name, P-S was reluctant to go beyond building a mock-up of the car. By the time Budd began to produce its version, the term had become synonymous with the design, and since Pullman did not have a similar car of its own, and more importantly was without plans to build one, it allowed Budd to use the name on the condition that the car would be advertised as "Operated by Pullman." Truly, Pullman saw the Slumbercoach as

its service trademark, and most railroads that bought or leased the cars assigned a Pullman porter to them.

The Slumbercoach's higher capacity and smaller rooms were a recipe for lower space charges. Rates established for NYC's New York/Boston-Chicago runs were \$7 for a single room and \$12.60 for a double. The single rooms were arranged on two levels, with part of each room either above or below an adjacent one, somewhat like the earlier duplex roomette car. The double rooms were all on the main floor level.

All the rooms featured a new berth arrangement that made it unnecessary to have a 6-foot height of unobstructed wall space into which the berth of the conventional roomette had to fold. The single-room berths and the lower berths in the double rooms were split transversely and folded from two opposing wall areas to provide a sleeping surface measuring 23 inches wide by 72 inches long.

### TROUBLE AHEAD

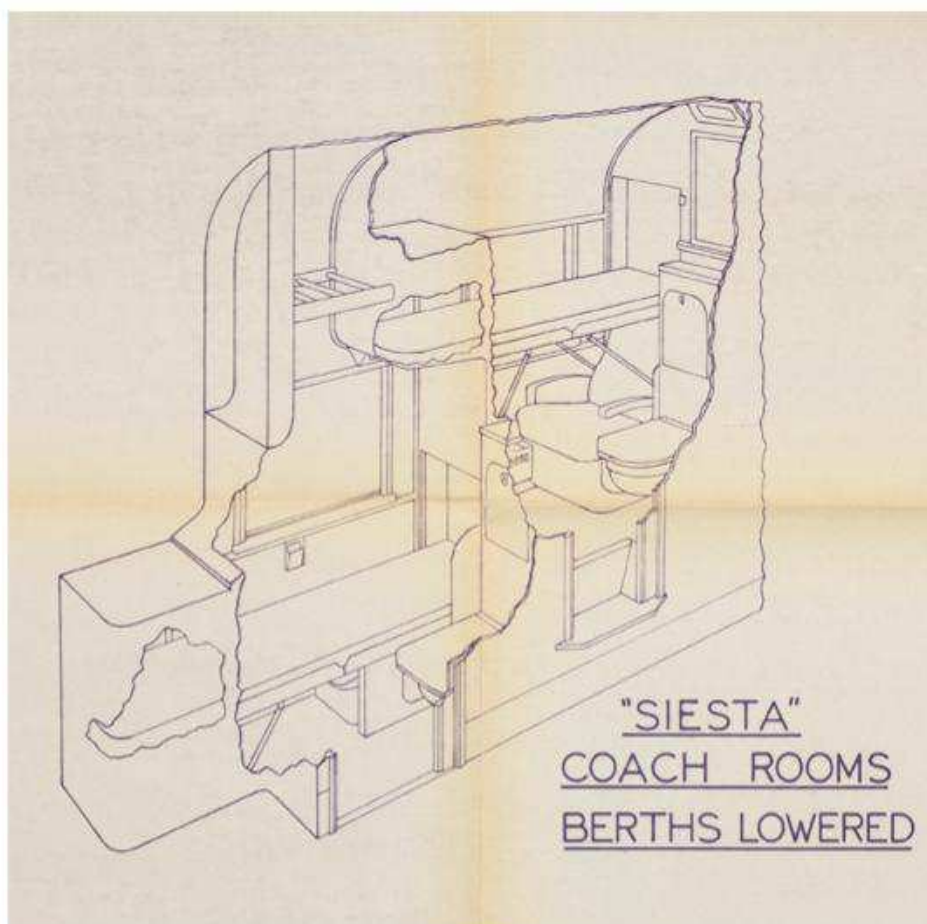
The introduction of the service was New York Central's last effort to reclaim passenger traffic on its through trains. In retrospect, as cars for NYC's postwar Great Steel Fleet were being delivered in 1948, the great American passenger train

was already in transition, actually heading toward virtual extinction.

During World War II, the Central, like other railroads, had experienced record profits not seen since before the Great Depression. Enthusiasm ran high as the company planned for brand-new passenger equipment from Pullman-Standard, Budd, and American Car & Foundry beginning in 1943. However, NYC President Gustav Metzger warned that although new equipment would give a boost to ridership, there were serious issues that had to be addressed if the passenger train were to maintain its popularity and earn a return on investment.

Between 1946 and '50, NYC received the bulk of the 741 passenger cars it had ordered beginning in 1944. These new cars augmented an already large fleet of prewar lightweight equipment, mostly sleeping cars in the forms of 17- and 18-roomette cars, 4-compartment/4-bedroom/2-drawing room cars (4-4-2s), 10-roomette/5-bedroom cars, 6-bedroom lounge cars, and sleeper-observation cars containing one master room and two double bedrooms. By 1956, much of the fleet was surplus.

When Robert R. Young emerged as victor in a bitter proxy contest for control of NYC in May 1954, he chose as the rail-



Line drawings show Siesta-coach single rooms set up for day and night use. To save space, the beds consisted of two fold-down sections.

Both, CLASSIC TRAINS collection



road's new president Alfred E. Perlman, a pragmatic and astute railroader, but one who had no love for passenger trains.

Young set out to recast NYC's passenger service and make it the model operation he had been championing. He established a passenger research bureau whose goal was to identify the costs of operating passenger trains and seek solutions to reduce those costs, while improving car and train utilization, all with an aim at reforming the railroad's passenger rate structure to make train travel more affordable, and therefore more desirable.

In 1956, the carbuilders would respond with a variety of low-cost alternatives to attract passengers. Budd's offerings included the "tubular" coaches that became the Pennsylvania Railroad's *Keystone* train, the Pioneer III demonstrator car, and the Slumbercoach.

Actually, as early as May 1954, NYC had announced that it was purchasing 10 Siesta-Coaches from Budd (at \$210,000 per car), featuring 32 single rooms and 4 doubles, and had even displayed mock-ups of the accommodations in Grand Central Terminal. But the order was can-

## FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS HAD COME TO VIEW PASSENGER SERVICE AS A MONEY-LOSING VENTURE.

celed, most likely the result of the sudden change in NYC leadership, the company's financial condition, and the expectation that the ultra-lightweight "new trains" that Young espoused would revolutionize NYC's passenger business, rendering the Siesta-Coaches surplus.

Basic passenger philosophy had changed, too. Before the war, the railroads and Pullman offered a choice of several types of accommodations in sleeping cars in order to offer different levels of comfort. That philosophy evolved in light of the changed profile of the traveling public and increased competition from other transport modes. By 1948, 10-room-ette/6-bedroom cars with a capacity of 22 patrons predominated, but travel by Pullman was still expensive. By the mid-1950s, the competitive environment dictated a more aggressive approach to the revenue side of the issue. The Central needed to raise the earnings of each pas-

senger car by increasing its capacity.

With Pullman traffic declining faster than coach traffic, NYC determined it had to restructure the services and accommodations it offered, but to do so without ordering new equipment. This led to a proposal to convert existing sleeping cars with a capacity of 17 to 20 persons to accommodate as many patrons as possible in order to get a higher rate of return per car.

Although cheaper than buying new equipment, rebuilding existing cars did involve significant costs. With the country in a recession in early 1957, and NYC already burdened with \$800 million in long-term debt, those costs would dictate the decisions of the next two years.

To fund a conversion program, Central needed the support of financial institutions, which had come to view passenger service as a money-losing venture. Although it could be argued that many of the trains themselves were profitable, it was the *combined* costs allocated to the delivery of passenger services that were instrumental in the production of the deficits. Financial institutions read this as passenger deficits, and no matter how calculated, this aspect would play another role in the events of 1957–58.

NYC approached Pullman-Standard requesting car conversion estimates.

### CONVERTING THE FLEET

Estimates were under way as early as March 18, 1957. In a memo, Pullman-Standard's C. H. Poole presented the preliminary estimated costs to NYC for consideration. Conversion costs were for a duplex car, initially broken down into units — modules, actually, as each was a separate module that was built into the car: a lower single room would cost \$3,627; upper single room, \$4,554; double room with upper berth, \$4,977.

Equally illuminating are the estimated conversion costs for the so-called Siesta cars. Before the adoption of "Slumbercoach," the term "Siesta" was used by Pullman and Budd to identify the low-fare alternative sleeper car. Curiously, "Siesta" is crossed out in the memos which accompanied estimates for conversions of prewar all-roomette cars [see sidebar, facing page].

Thinking New York Central would view the costs as too high in relation to a



About the size of a standard roomette, a Slumbercoach double room featured facing seats by day, upper and lower berths by night, plus sink and toilet (like an Amtrak Viewliner roomette).

Burlington Route



competing car-modification proposal the railroad had received from Budd, P-S took another look at its estimates.

In an internal memo dated May 2, 1957, to Pullman-Standard Vice President G. W. Bohannon, P-S's J. E. Flannery discussed a revised estimate for the conversion of prewar NYC Plan 4069-E 4-compartment/4-bedroom/2-drawing room sleepers into "slumber coaches" with 20 single rooms and 8 double bedrooms, based on a mock-up built at Pullman's Calumet shops. The revised estimate, "based on the present heating system remaining, is \$100,776.35." If a Moduzone type heat was to be installed, with or without individual room controls, then the price would be higher. Perhaps most revealing are the handwritten notations: "NYC talked to Budd on converting 10 22-rmtte. - \$129,000 - have 10 more available."

Obviously, Pullman-Standard was doing further studies in light of Budd's counter proposal.

With NYC asking for estimates for conversions of existing equipment, it can be assumed that there were plans for the converted cars' use. There were. With 10 cars, NYC could outfit two trains, including spares, and in this case it was proposed that the standard sleepers on the all-Pullman *Commodore Vanderbilt* be replaced with coaches and Slumbercoaches.

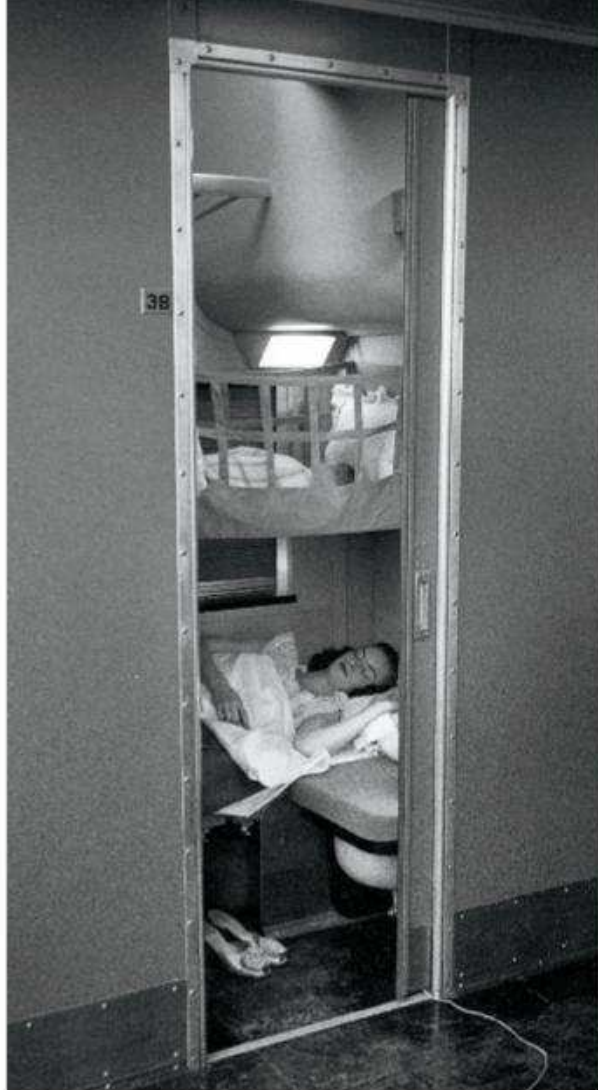
Capital funding was necessary for the plan to move forward, but the banks were unwilling to lend money for such a venture, especially in 1957. There was NYC's existing debt to consider; the lightweight, low-slung *Xplorer* of 1956 had proven to be a flop; and both passenger and freight traffic levels were depressed.

Then on January 20, 1958, NYC's board met with Chairman Young at his Palm Beach estate and voted to suspend payment of dividends to stockholders. The price of NYC stock had hit new lows — a fraction of what it had been when Young took over. Indeed, he had already sold most of his own NYC stock. What happened next was unforeseen.

## PERLMAN TAKES CONTROL

Young's sudden death by suicide five days later on January 25, 1958, created shock waves throughout the industry, and to this day his motives are pure speculation. What is known is that almost immediately NYC President Perlman set out to transform NYC's passenger service his way, which was total elimination, or at least massive retrenchment.

Perlman was as much a realist as he



Left: A mock-up of a Slumbercoach single room viewed from the corridor shows mom in the bed below a collapsible crib for her baby. Above: This view looks through the window of a *Denver Zephyr* Slumbercoach single room set up for daytime occupancy.

Two photos, CLASSIC TRAINS collection

## PULLMAN'S CONVERSION COST ESTIMATES

**Pullman-Standard's** March 18, 1957, memo to NYC gave costs for two car types:

"The estimate to convert the 17- or 18-roomette cars into 36-single room 'siesta' cars, including strip interior, remodel body framing (\$9,393.75); relocate electric locker and switchboard and apply General Toilet at vestibule end; apply clean and soiled linen and equipment locker and cooler at blind end (\$4,990); necessary bottom remodeling (\$10,100); apply 18 lower single rooms (\$59,724); apply 18 upper single rooms (\$76,410). Total: \$160,617.75."

A 4-single/20-double layout would cost less, an estimated \$133,650 per car.

The memo continued: "The above figures are the cost per car based on remodeling one or two cars. If 10 or more cars were to be remodeled, the cost per car could be reduced approximately 5 percent on labor and 10 percent on material, making the totals as follows: 36-single room type: on full overhead basis \$149,800; on contract overhead basis \$121,000; 20-double room, 4-single room type: on full overhead basis, \$124,300; on contract overhead basis, \$100,800.

"If rounded end observation cars of Plans 4079-A, 4080-A, or 4081 were to be remodeled to 'siesta' cars, there would be an additional expense on either type of 'siesta' car for squaring up the round end, of approximately \$29,289.00 per car, including full overheads, or \$24,072.01 including contract percentages. . . ."

The memo went on to list the cars that were available for conversion: "10 cars PRR, Plan 4068-E, 17-room; 12 cars PRR, Plan 4068-H&J, 18-room; 1 car PRR, Plan 4080-A, 2 master room-bedroom-bar/lounge-observation, round end; 1 car PRR, Plan 4081, 2 drawing room-compartment-bedroom-lounge-observation, round end; and 4 cars NYC, Plan 4079-A, 4 bedroom-bar/lounge-observation, round end."

Other options were considered. Estimates dated April 30, 1957, reflect the costs of conversions being performed at Pullman, "with a cost per car, less Moduzone heat and individual heat controls on basis of finish, trimmings, etc. (except lighting fixtures and window curtains) furnished complete by Dwight-Austin Co., our shops to assemble in the car, would be \$143,262.51 [per car] on contract percentage basis."

The memo noted the figures were based on remodeling 2 to 10 cars, and that the remodeled cars would come from a group of 20 NYC-owned 4-compartment/4-bedroom/2-drawing room cars equipped with 41 ER or 41 HR trucks.

The April 30 memo concluded by noting that the "average wage rate effective May 1, 1957, of \$2.28 per hour was used."



was a shrewd railroader and businessman. Despite his disdain for passenger trains, he held the conviction that as long as passenger service made a profit, he would be for it, which was about as positive as he ever got on the subject. Moreover, he recognized that for the time being, he and his railroad were locked into the business of transporting passengers, even at a loss. Since the long-distance overnight trains were still a fixture in rail transport, what his railroad needed was an alternative to the first-class sleeping car in order to maximize revenues and minimize losses.

Naturally, state and federal regulators wouldn't allow total elimination, but with his board's approval, Perlman began to dismantle passenger services where he could. Transcontinental sleeper lines, initiated in 1946 when Young was attempting a takeover of the Pullman Company, were terminated in February 1958. That April, the *Commodore Vanderbilt* was

## PERLMAN BEGAN TO DISMANTLE THE CENTRAL'S PASSENGER SERVICES WHERE HE COULD.

"combined" with the *20th Century Limited*. The former had been carrying coaches for a year, and its status already had been downgraded. The *Century*, meanwhile, lost its all-Pullman status with the addition of the coaches from the *Commodore*; the twin-unit dining-car set with the kitchen-dormitory car was replaced by the cars built for the second section of the *Century*, which had been assigned to the *Commodore*. With the kitchen-lounge car as a part of the dining-car set, the *Century's* elegant mid-train lounge cars were deemed non-essential and dropped. In a move already in the works, NYC took over operation of sleeping cars on its lines, terminating its agreement with the Pullman Company effective July 1.

Reducing the number of passenger trains created surplus equipment, and the prewar cars that had been considered for conversion were among the first to go. Instead of being converted, the 17- and 18-roomette cars and those 4-4-2s that were not still owned by Pullman, or in the pool service, became candidates for disposal. Then Perlman began chipping away at the postwar cars. The first were the unpopular Pullman-Standard-built 22-roomette cars. The Budd 22-roomette cars, however, possessed potential.

### ENTER THE SLEEPERCOACH

After reviewing the Burlington Route's initial reports on the success of the *Denver Zephyr* Slumbercoaches in 1957, Pull-



NYC Chairman Robert R. Young (left) was a vocal champion of passenger service in the postwar era. The road's president, Alfred E. Perlman (right) was far less sanguine, and he moved to exit the business after Young's death in 1958. They're with the ill-fated *Xplorer* train of 1956.

New York Central



man-Standard and Budd developed competing cost estimates for the conversion of 10 NYC Budd 22-roomette sleepers. These cars were the perfect candidates, as the demand for 22-roomette cars was no longer warranted because traffic patterns had changed dramatically from the time the cars were ordered more than a decade earlier. The recession and NYC's company finances placed the plan on hold, however. The railroad ultimately devised a "Plan B" involving 23 Budd 22-roomette sleepers, and these cars were removed from service pending possible conversion to economy sleepers.

In the interim, however, NYC decided to lease four Slumbercoach cars from Budd in fall 1959. This would allow the road to test the economy sleeper concept on its own routes before proceeding with the conversion plan. These cars, each containing 24 economy roomettes and 8 economy double bedrooms, entered service effective with the October 25, 1959, timetable change to be used as a part of the *Commodore Vanderbilt's* consist in the *20th Century Limited* and in the Boston-Chicago *New England States*.

But there was a problem. Recall that Pullman, the originator of the Slumbercoach name, had granted permission to use the term for Budd-built cars, provided they were billed as "Operated by Pullman." The Central could not make this claim because it had withdrawn from Pullman. Thus NYC was forced to come up with a different name, and it settled on "Sleepercoach."

The inauguration of Sleepercoach service in 1959 was aimed at the long-distance traveler, with advertising listing through fares, *i.e.*, New York-Chicago and Boston-Chicago. Since the cost for a ticket was only slightly higher than that of coach fare, the cars were a hit.

During the trial period with the four leased cars, NYC decided to convert 10 of its Budd-built 22-roomette cars into Sleepercoaches of a slightly different configuration. Instead of 24 duplex roomettes, the cars contained 12 duplex roomettes, 4 roomettes of standard dimensions but with a smaller seat and fold-out bed sections, and 10 economy double bedrooms made from the former standard roomettes. Although the decision was made to hold out 23 Budd 22-roomette cars for possible conversion, only 20 were removed from service for the project, assuming that the 4 leased Budd cars would be successful, which they were.

The following year, after realizing a return on its investment and gauging the



**An NYC Sleepercoach porter awaits his passengers at Cleveland. Converted from all-roomette cars, the Central's 10 high-capacity sleepers were too little, too late in a declining market.**

Herbert H. Harwood

popularity of the service, NYC accepted the Budd proposal for conversion of 22-roomette sleepers. Beginning in 1961, 10 Budd *Harbor*-series cars went back to Budd for conversion into Sleepercoaches, entering service in April 1962. (The remaining 10 22-roomette cars set aside for the project were not converted.) NYC returned the four leased cars to Budd in '64.

The 10 cars NYC had Budd rebuild into Sleepercoaches were the railroad's

last attempt to salvage its deteriorating passenger situation. Although the new economy service remained popular for as long as the cars were in service, it was not so successful as to stave off the decline in patronage over the long term. ■

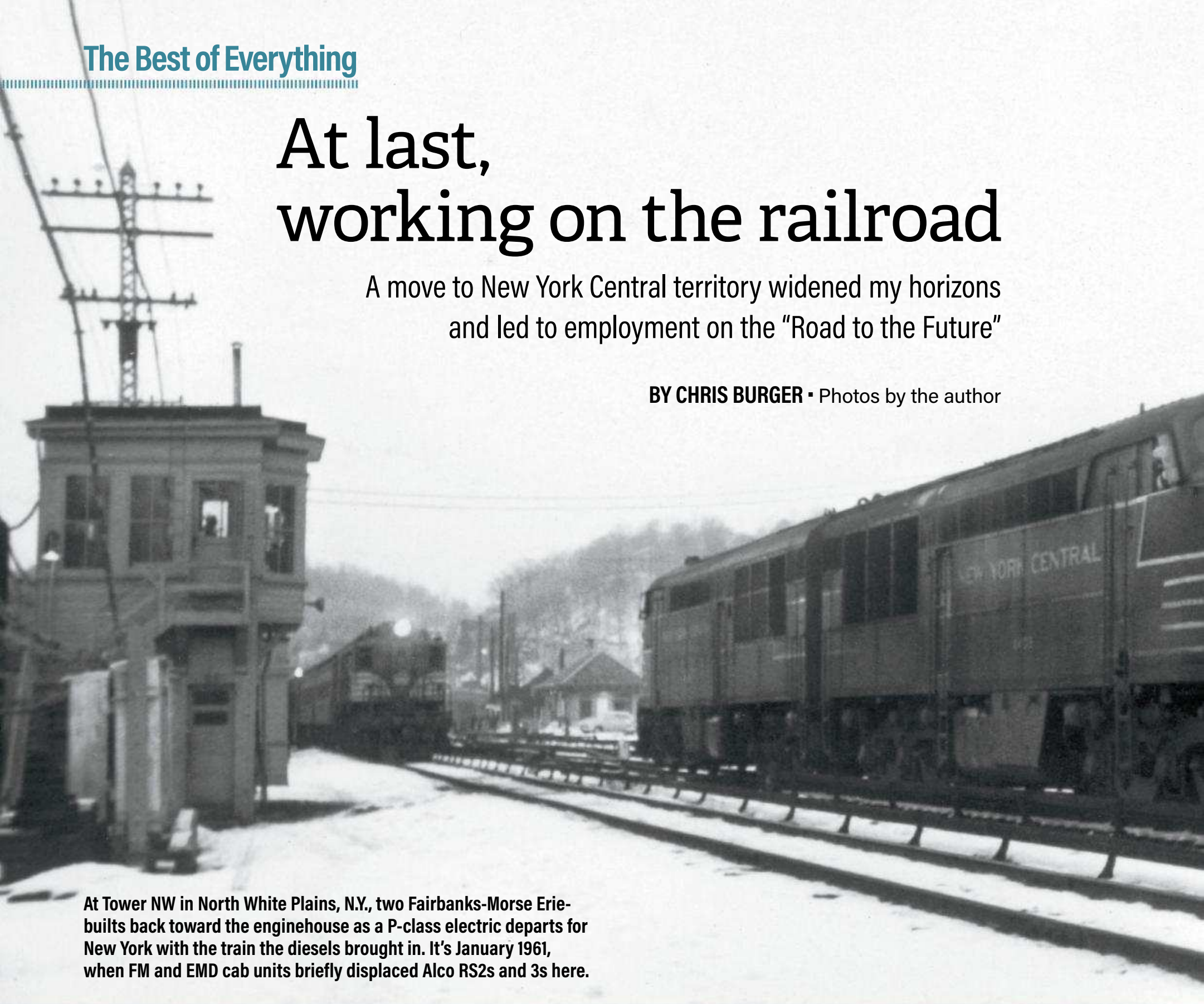
*GEOFFREY H. DOUGHTY is the author of numerous books on rail passenger service and the New York Central. This is his sixth byline in a CLASSIC TRAINS publication.*



# At last, working on the railroad

A move to New York Central territory widened my horizons  
and led to employment on the "Road to the Future"

BY CHRIS BURGER • Photos by the author



At Tower NW in North White Plains, N.Y., two Fairbanks-Morse Erie-builts back toward the enginehouse as a P-class electric departs for New York with the train the diesels brought in. It's January 1961, when FM and EMD cab units briefly displaced Alco RS2s and 3s here.



Two generations of electric M.U. cars, plus a lone Alco RS3, stand idle in Yards A and B at North White Plains in September 1962. The roundhouse is visible at right in this northward view. Today, Metro North's third rail extends another 30 miles north, to Brewster.





**S motor 133 tows a disabled T motor and its train at Crestwood in mid-1962. Bungalows like the one at right were no place to be on a hot day.**

**W**

**hen I learned that we'd be moving away from Dedham, Mass.,** during the summer after my

sophomore year in high school, I wasn't a happy camper. But I felt better when I learned that our new home would be near North White Plains, N.Y., the end of the electrified portion of the New York Central's Harlem Division. On weekdays, 50 or so electric multiple-unit trains in each direction originated and terminated there, and 20 more trains in each direction to and from Brewster or Chatham, N.Y., changed power. Mixed in was a pair of "traveling switcher" local freights. It was a busy place indeed, with a roundhouse and turntable on one side of the main lines and an electric "motor" shop on the other, with three yards to support it all. Outbound through passenger jobs (westward by timetable) changed power at the Holland Avenue platform, while originating and terminating M.U. trains used, and inbound (eastward) through trains changed power at, platforms a tenth of a mile or so farther west. All this was within interlocking limits controlled by Tower NW.

One evening I summoned up my courage and picked my way across the four tracks and third rails to the tower, where I met Pete Lehr, a tall, distinguished-looking operator who, I learned later, had been a New York, Westchester & Boston engineer. When "The Westchester" folded in 1937, he and many other employees found work on the New Haven and New York Central. Pete loved to relive his trips on the NYW&B, and I liked to kid him that I felt as if he had qualified me on the route. More importantly, however, he taught me how to operate the NW interlocking. The normal routine was for me to handle the levers while Pete called out the routes, recorded the moves, and OS'd the trains to the dispatcher. We became good friends and remained so through my college years.

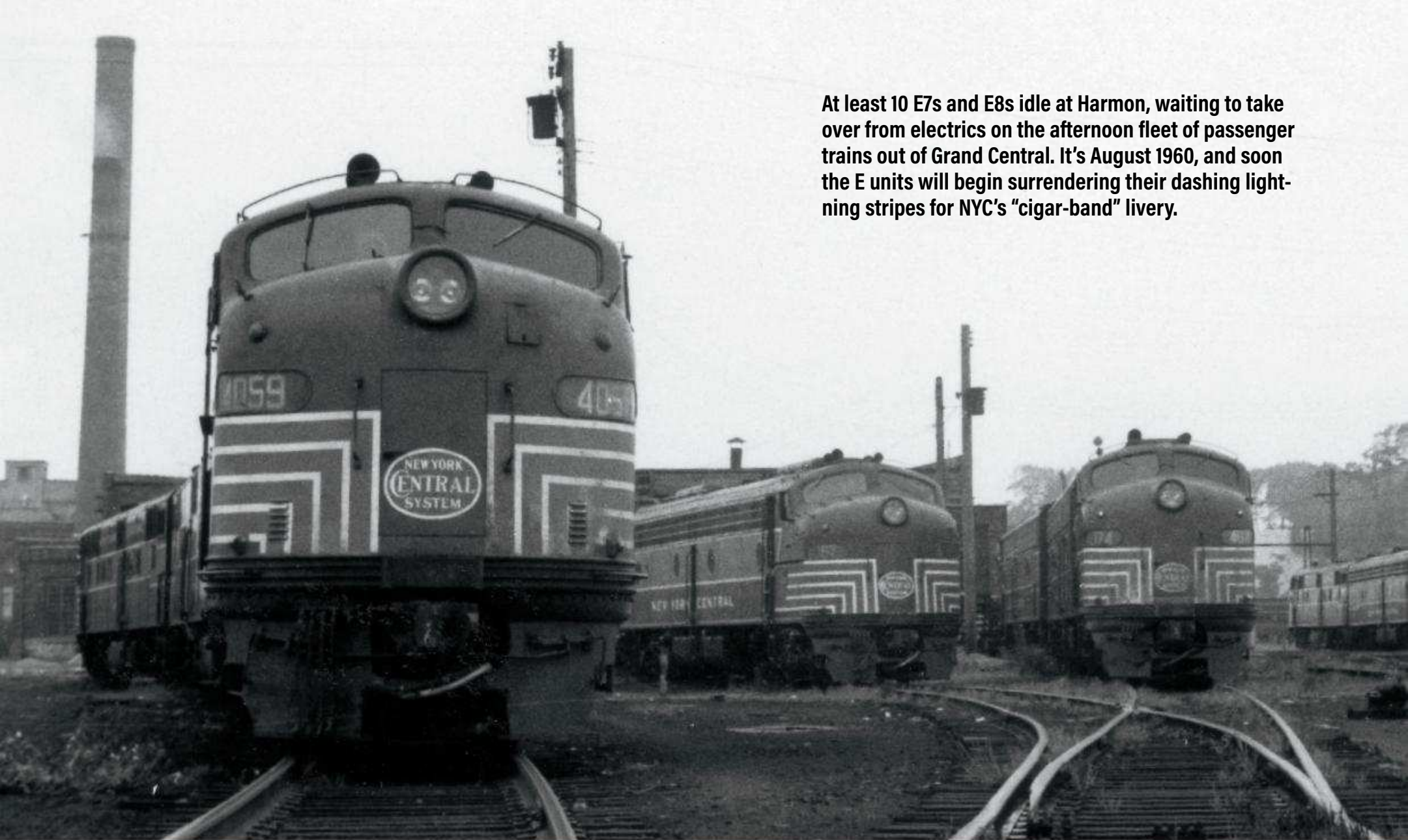
My railroad career began in 1959 after my freshman year of college. Pete had passed the word that I'd be looking for a summer job, and Al Hagedorn, another ex-Westchester man, offered me a signal helper job in a construction gang headquartered in the old roundhouse at Harmon on the Hudson Division. The work was mostly with a pick and shovel, digging trenches to lay cable, but I also learned how to climb poles — and, more importantly, how to get back down splinter-free — and spent some time with the district signal inspectors as they made tests at various interlockings. The pick-and-shovel work was often right next to the 660-volt D.C. third rail, so you had to be careful what you were doing with the tools. I never did hit the rail, and don't remember anyone else doing so, either.

I enjoyed the work so much that I decided not to go back to college and spent much of the next year working in the signal engineer's office, where we designed circuits for new signal installations and revisions to old ones. My dad had gone to night school for his chemistry degree and told me how tough it was, but I didn't quite believe him until I took some night courses myself. This was one reason I decided to go back to college full-time for the degree I knew I'd need for a management job. I also made contacts during the year that led to subsequent summer jobs and ultimately NYC's management training program.

In summer 1961, I was back in the signal department as a signal mechanic in a construction gang installing CTC on the Hudson Division west of Harmon. Headquarters was at Peekskill in an outfit consisting of bunk cars and an old diner, complete with a chef who'd once worked on the *20th Century Limited*. Home was within easy driving distance, so I didn't use the bunk car, but I did have some great meals in the diner — complete with NYC china and silverware.

A signal mechanic was one step on the pay and experience





At least 10 E7s and E8s idle at Harmon, waiting to take over from electrics on the afternoon fleet of passenger trains out of Grand Central. It's August 1960, and soon the E units will begin surrendering their dashing lightning stripes for NYC's "cigar-band" livery.

scale above a helper, and the work was mostly wiring inside signal bungalows and occasionally outside at switch locations. You haven't lived until you've spent a hot, humid summer afternoon inside a metal signal bungalow, and I took advantage of every passing train to go outside for a roll-by inspection. I never envisioned a career in the signal department, but my experiences, insight, and the things I learned there — especially that signaling was a tool to keep trains moving as well as keeping them apart — helped me throughout my career.

### CENTRAL'S VARIETY SHOW

Motive power and passenger equipment in and around North White Plains was interesting and varied. A fleet of Alco RS2s and 3s handled passenger and freight trains from there to Brewster and Chatham, except for a month or so in the winter of 1960–61, when some of them were replaced by a small but eclectic group of Fairbanks-Morse Erie-built and C-Liners as well as EMD F3s and E8s. These cab units were unpopular with the crews and didn't last long, but I had a great time photographing them while I was home on Christmas vacation.

In the electric zone to Grand Central Terminal, P- and T-class motors dating from the 1920s did the honors. Occasionally one would fail en route and be replaced by one of the 1906-era S-class switchers based at Mott Haven, NYC's big passenger yard in the Bronx. Long since demoted from regular road duty, the S motors were rough riders at passenger speeds, and I remember one engineman telling me he ran standing up most of the way. Trains originating and terminating at North White Plains, as well as at the closer-in points of Crestwood and Mt.

You haven't lived until  
you've spent a hot,  
humid summer  
afternoon inside a metal  
signal bungalow.

Vernon, consisted of 4200- and 4500-series M.U. equipment. The former were heavyweight cars from the 1920s; the latter were air-conditioned lightweights built by ACF in the early '50s.

Besides the FM and EMD cab units, we had some additional excitement during the 1960–61 winter when a snow blower, made from a jet engine mounted on the frame of an old caboose, arrived to help clear heavy snow. I saw it at Brewster, where it had some success clearing the yard, but I later heard it couldn't be used in electrified territory because it blew the wood covering off the third rail. This was a pioneering effort by NYC and led to the self-propelled jet snow blowers that are common today.

My 1962 summer job was as a "telegrapher-leverman" on the electric zone extra board. Some of the time was spent qualifying ("posting," as it was called) at various locations, but I was familiar enough with some of them from my signal jobs that a day or two was all I needed after qualifying on the Book of Rules. ("Telegrapher" in the job title was an anachronism, as dispatching here was all by telephone. In multiple-track territory, train orders were rare, but I did copy a few and the dispatcher seemed surprised that I knew the routine.)

I covered vacation vacancies at NW, RK (Crestwood), and JO (Woodlawn), and posted at MO (Mott Haven), NK (on the Park Avenue viaduct near 125th Street station), and DV (Spuyten Duyvil). The Crestwood job involved selling tickets, along with operating a small CTC-type machine which controlled a pair of "middle" sidings and both ends of the four-track yard for the commuter trains originating and terminating there. Woodlawn was the junction where New Haven's Shore Line trains entered or left NYC's Harlem Division, and JO controlled the interlock-





An old wooden caboose brings up the rear of an RS3-powered "traveling switcher" at Crestwood station. The short freight holds a middle siding as an S motor comes in with a commuter train.



In an example of "Road to the Future" innovation, NYC fashioned this jet-powered snow blower from an old wooden caboose. It stands, with a tank car for fuel and RS3 for power, at Brewster in December '61.

ings there and at Mt. Vernon, a mile or so to the west and the beginning of the four-track territory to Grand Central, in which NYC and NH each scheduled 90 or so weekday trains in each direction. New Haven's trains going to Grand Central were westward in the NH timetable and eastward in ours, where they were identified by the letter "Y" after their New Haven number. NYC trains going the same direction were eastbound. Passing times at stations were shown to the half-minute; I never encountered that level of precision anywhere else.

JO and NW were busy enough, but MO was in a class all its own. This was the junction of the Harlem and Hudson lines and also handled the leads and associated tracks in the NYC coach yard. Central and New Haven trains on the Harlem side, the "Great Steel Fleet" and commuter jobs on the Hudson, dead-head moves to and from Grand Central, and coachyard moves kept a train director and levermen on each shift busy.

One morning, shortly before I was to head back to Providence College for my senior year, I was getting ready to end my third-trick tour of duty at NW tower when the road foreman of engines called, asking if I'd be interested in a job in engine service. I'd had opportunities to run engines here and there and enjoyed it, as I have many times since, but I felt like I had a path to a management job, so I said thanks but no thanks. It was a tough decision, but one I never regretted. **1**



*CHRIS BURGER, retired since 1998 from a career with NYC, New Haven, Chicago & North Western, Central Vermont, and Central of Indiana, lives with his wife Rita in north-central Indiana. This is the fifth entry in his "Best of Everything" retrospective series.*



In a view from track-spanning Tower NK in Harlem, two trains from Grand Central head up the Park Avenue viaduct in July 1962. On the outside is an NYC T motor; a New Haven FL9 comes up the middle.



# Heavy on the throttle

A Conrail assistant track supervisor gets to play engineer on an F unit out of Boston

**Like many boys growing up, I wanted to be a locomotive engineer.** I envisioned myself at the throttle of a fast passenger train or a long freight drag, or even a switcher pushing cars in a yard. Little did I know that during the early part of my railroad career, I would be able to get a chance to fulfill my dream, albeit briefly.

It started back in August 1978, when I was the assistant track supervisor on Conrail's Subdivision No. 1 headquartered at Beacon Park Yard in Allston, Mass., 4 miles from Boston's South Station. The track supervisor and I were responsible for the maintenance of main-line and yard tracks of the former New York Central lines radiating out of Boston as far west as Southboro. Everyone referred to it as the "B&A," which was short for the Boston & Albany Railroad, taken over by the New York Central early in the 20th century.

Our subdivision, which started a half mile outside of South Station, had Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter trains that ran in the morning and evening between Boston and Framingham, 22 miles to the west. The speed for the passenger trains was 60 mph over most of the double-track main line, which required it to be maintained to high standards. Well, this was not always the case, especially at a few turnouts, which constantly needed surfacing and bolt-tightening.

After numerous complaints from train crews and even passengers, the division engineer issued an edict that we were to ride the head end of a passenger or freight train once a month over our territory. This was fantastic news! I was told to ride a locomotive and I would even get paid for it! So at least once a month, you would see my smiling face in the fireman's seat of a Conrail switcher bouncing along the Grand Junction Branch or, better yet, up high in a cab unit on an MBTA commuter train. I occasionally rode an E8 on Amtrak train 449, the *Lake Shore Limited*. I made it a point to do a lot of "track inspection rides" during the time when MBTA leased the four ex-Delaware

& Hudson Alco PAs for use on the Framingham runs. But it gets even better.

I often rode with an engineer named Joe who ran the Framingham local that departed South Station at 5 p.m. Joe was a few years away from retirement. He enjoyed being a locomotive engineer, especially on this run, as he could be home during the day between his morning and evening runs. In the cab, most of our talk was typical railroad talk: lousy track, lousy equipment, management that does not listen, and so on. We talked about the Red Sox, Boston politics, and my love of railroading, especially riding in engine cabs. I gladly talked about my cab rides on the Baltimore & Ohio and Penn Central during my college days and proudly described the few times I even ran the locomotive, short as they were.

By spring 1979, the PAs were gone off the Framingham runs, being replaced by FP10s, which were F3 and F7 units that had been rebuilt by the Illinois Central Gulf's Paducah Shops in Kentucky. I watched them go by while I was working out on the tracks, always wondering what it would be like to ride an F unit.

In late June '79, I got a job in the Conrail track quality control department in Philadelphia, which would start July 1. My time to enjoy these cab rides, especially in an F unit, was drawing to a quick close. So with a few days left of my "tour of duty" on the B&A, I decided I needed one last cab ride to "say good bye." I chose the 5 p.m. Framingham train, run by my pal Joe, for my farewell trip.

As I walked down the platform along Track 8 at South Station, I noticed the train had an FP10, shiny in MBTA's purple-silver-yellow commuter-rail colors, at the head end of a bunch of old ex-New Haven Railroad coaches. I climbed up the ladder and went through the open cab door, saying, "Hi Joe, mind if I ride with you today?" He replied, "Glad to see you, Fran. No problem — come on in."

I settled into the fireman's seat and took out my pen and note cards to jot down the location of those rough spots everyone was complaining about. I explained to Joe about my pending departure from the Boston area and that this would be our last ride together. He said he was sorry to see me go and that he always enjoyed sharing his cab with me. Smelling the diesel exhaust, listening to the roar of the engine, and looking out over the nose at the station's maze of tracks and signals gave me a twinge of sadness. I always thought I would have time to take a lot of cab rides with the "Joes" of the world.

I was knocked out of my thoughts by the sound of the air venting from the brake stand, the clanging of the bell, and quick two hoots of the horn. We were on the move with our next stop being Back Bay station. After weaving through numerous turnouts, we went around the big right-hand curve immediately south of the station. We glided into Back Bay on Track 2, where a large crowd of weary downtown workers eagerly awaited their "chariots" to

take them home. Right after we stopped, Joe looked at me and said, "Hey Fran, would you like to run her to Framingham?" I dropped my pen and note cards and blurted out a resounding "Sure!"

We changed places, and Joe gave me a few basic instructions. I sat up real straight, put my sweaty hands on the brake and throttle, and stared through the dirty windshield at the track ahead. Two minutes later, Joe shouted "High-ball!" I jumped into action, recalling all I had read about starting a train.

My hands started flying all over the place; I pulled out the knob to start the bell ringing, yanked twice on the cord connected to the horn, released the automatic brake, "bailed off" the independent brake, and moved the throttle to notch 1, then notch 2. I looked out the window down at the ballast to make sure we were

I climbed up the F unit's ladder and went through the cab door, saying, "Hi, Joe, mind if I ride with you today?"





MBTA FP10 1150 (rebuilt from GM&O F3 885A) is at Wellesley Farms station, 12.6 miles west of Boston on the old B&A, with a train from Framingham on a rainy morning in March 1979.

Tom Nelligan





**Leased D&H Alco PA No. 19 brings Boston-Framingham train 451 into Wellesley Farms on October 13, 1978, the last day the PAs ran for MBTA. Note the relative condition of the two tracks.**

Scott A. Hartley

moving. Joe said I was doing fine and to open it up more. This I did, pretty quickly to notch 6, causing the train to really accelerate. We breezed along at about 50 mph, running parallel to the Massachusetts Turnpike, which was just outside the fireman's window. I notched out further and got the speed up to 60 on the single track after roaring through CP 3 at the east end of Beacon Park.

As we approached CP 4, Joe hollered across the noisy cab, "Don't forget about the 40 mph slow order at CP 4!"

How did I forget *that*? After all, I was the one who put the slow order on earlier in the week because the train crews complained that it rode rough! I reduced the throttle and applied the train brakes, which quickly slowed us down to about 50 mph when we hit the turnout. We bounced from side to side, my sweaty

hands on the brake and my face white. Joe took it all in good stride and said to release the brakes and open the throttle, which I did.

Color started coming back to my face by the time we pulled into Newtonville, the first of three stops close together. Pretty soon we were off again and I started to get the hang of stopping where the conductor wanted us to and pulling away smoothly. By the time we got to Wellesley, I had this locomotive engineer thing down pat. Or so I thought.

We approached Framingham and I blew the horn for the Bishop Street and Concord Street grade crossings before pulling into the station. I really laid on the horn just to show them who was running this train! As soon as we were stopped and the people were getting off, the dispatcher, named Phil, came over the

radio: "Conrail Springfield East End Dispatcher to the MBTA 1152, over."

Joe jumped up, surprised that we are being "summoned" by the almighty Phil, grabbed the handset, and answered, "This is MBTA 1152, over."

Phil said, "Have your conductor call me on the phone, over."

Joe replied in the affirmative, then dropped down from the engine to walk back along the train to give the bad news to the conductor. Meanwhile, I was sitting in the engineer's seat glowing like I had just won the Irish Sweepstakes, yet also scared that I might have gotten caught playing engineer.

About 5 long minutes later, Joe climbed back on the engine, smiling. He told me that dispatcher Phil wanted to know why we had arrived at Framingham 3 minutes ahead of schedule! After I let out a big sigh of relief, Joe went on to say the conductor told Phil that we were light on passengers, so we could get moving quicker after our station stops. Of course the conductor knew Joe was not running the train, but he would not let onto Phil who the speed demon engineer was that brought the train into Framingham ahead of schedule.

At the end of the run I thanked Joe for the ride and for the opportunity to run the engine. He said he enjoyed the "fast trip," and wished me luck in my new job and with my railroad career. I walked to my car parked at the Framingham yard office, elated at what I had just done, yet a little sad that I probably would not see Joe or the FP10s ever again.

At least I got to run an F unit, even if I was a little heavy on the throttle!

— Fran Giacomina

## Spokes and flanges

A boy's bike takes him trackside for his first up-close look at railroading

**I've always connected bicycles and trains in my mind.** An odd combination? Not really, if you consider how railroading popped into my head in the first place.

It was a sultry June morning in 1959, a couple of weeks after I had finished second grade. The excitement of school's end and summer vacation had decayed into utter boredom. I had finished breakfast and was sitting on the front porch trying to think of something — anything — to

do as I stared at my constant companion, a hand-me-down, fat-tired, red-and-white bicycle.

Somewhere off in the distance I heard the faint blasts of an air horn — a long, a long, a short, and a long. What was that? It must be a train on that track that ran about a mile from our home in Tulsa, Okla. I knew it was there but never thought much about it.

Hey, that's an idea! Maybe I'd see a

train or something if I rode over there. I got up, yelled through the screen door, "I'm going bike riding!" and received Mom's standard, "Be careful!" Off I went.

I heard the horn again, but by the time I crossed busy Peoria Avenue and rode the last two blocks to the track, there was nothing to see. Was there no train after all? Had I imagined it? Even an 8-year-old could figure out it had passed by already. I just needed to get there sooner.





Looking like the trains author Hart discovered 131 miles away in Tulsa in 1959, Midland Valley GP7 153 has hopper cars, boxcars, and lots of tank cars in tow at Panama, Okla., in mid-1962.

Louis A. Marre, Hal Miller collection

The next day, I waited at the same time on the porch until I heard the horn, performed the standard exchange with Mom, then tore off pedaling as fast as my little feet would spin. It was a cloudy, humid morning and the horn blasts were louder, and I heard a rumbling locomotive as I neared the track.

As I hit my coaster brake and stopped, I saw a strange light moving across the wall of the local lumber yard next to where I was. Then from around a curve came a black-and-red locomotive bearing down on my bike and me. It growled past, maybe 10 feet away, pulling a string of tank cars and boxcars, followed by a caboose in the same black-and-red scheme.

I was awestruck. I had never been close to a moving train before. I had to know more about these big, noisy things. I talked to Dad, who shared what he knew and promised to take me to visit his friend, Mr. Keith, who was the lead ticket agent at Tulsa's Union Depot. The big, spooky — and, by 1959, mostly empty — old station further piqued my interest.

I learned the track near our house was the Midland Valley Railroad, built at the turn of the 20th century to haul coal westward from Arkansas, but which made most of its money serving Oklahoma oil fields. The MV was affiliated with connecting roads Kansas, Oklahoma & Gulf and Oklahoma City-Ada-Atoka, and the threesome was known as the "Muskogee Group." The MV extended to Wichita, Kans., and an oil refinery in Barnsdall, Okla., 35½ miles north of Tulsa, was a major customer. That explained why MV trains always had lots of tank cars. Its GP7 locomotives were fairly new, having replaced steam just a few years earlier.

My summer-morning bike rides became routine, and the railroad's schedule was predictable enough that I could ex-

pect a show if I rode over after breakfast. Some days a train would stop and switch out a boxcar on the lumber yard's siding. One morning, I pedaled up to find an empty boxcar had rolled onto the derail and a crew in a truck was waiting to use the morning train's locomotive to reraill the errant car.

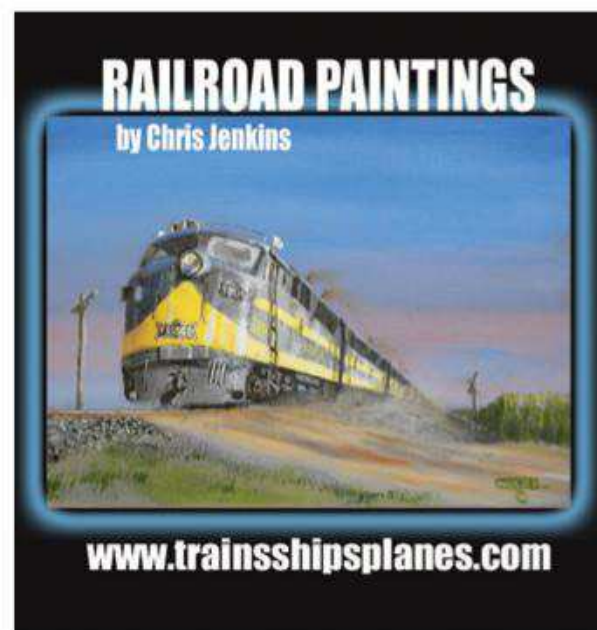
My interest in railroading grew. There were trips on the Frisco's *Meteor* and the Santa Fe's *Texas Chief*, and books given by a family friend filled with Lucius Beebe photos. It was all fascinating.

But like most boys, other interests came into my life. There were cars, girls, and buddies to hang around with. My bike rides were fewer each summer.

My last visit came by happenstance on a foggy, dark, and bitterly cold winter morning nearly eight years later. I was in high school now and had bummed an early ride to class. Biking in this weather was out of the question. As I got out of the car, I heard that familiar horn. Oh yes! Old memories came back. It was just a short walk from the school to the track, so I zipped up my coat, pulled down my hat, and jogged over.

The Midland Valley was gone now, merged into the Missouri Pacific. The ghostly Geep rumbling out of the fog was blue, but the string of tanks behind looked the same. They clattered by, followed by the red light on the caboose that quickly disappeared in the fog.

College, career, and a family were ahead for me. There have been lots of train trips and trackside visits since, though, and I like to think all of them began on a bicycle long ago. Today, the tracks are gone. Tulsa has turned the Midland Valley's right of way into the Osage Trail and there are lots of kids on bikes cruising it any summer morning. That seems appropriate. — *Paul Hart*



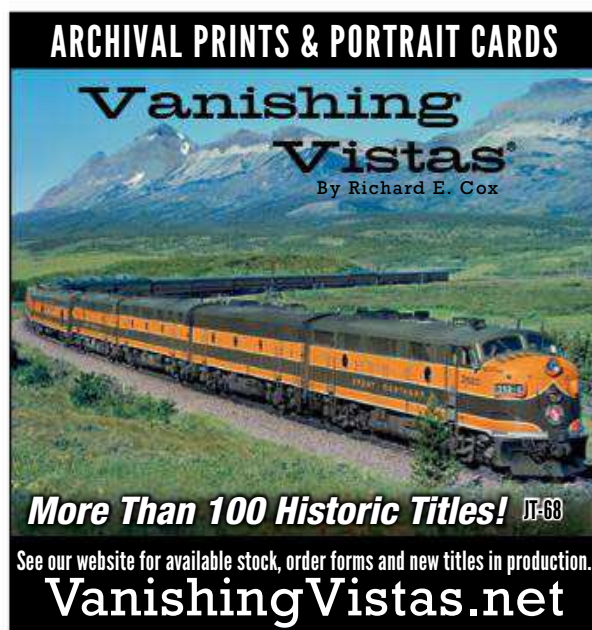
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# Colorado adventures in the 1940s

Thrilling times on the Rio Grande, including a ride down the Front Range on a 2-8-8-2 with no brakes!

**In the late 1940s I was fortunate to be in Denver,** at Lowry Air Base and later at the University of Denver. A shortage of funds for film, processing, and gas, plus working part time while in college, limited my ability and opportunities to get out on the railroad, and looking back I wonder that I was able to see as much as I did.

After my return from the military I was using a 4x5 Speed Graphic for black-and-white and a Kodak 35 for color. Color slide film was new, expensive, and slow, so I did not use it as much as I now wish I had. Lugging the Speed Graphic could be a chore when climbing a mountain to find the perfect photo location, and when I took some of the cab rides I will describe later I had to leave it in the car. Climbing on and off equipment was difficult with such a large camera.

Normal trackside photography was a piece of cake, even in terminals. I recorded the Great Western's entire roster in one day with the help of a couple of employees who moved two locomotives from the roundhouse so I could get pictures.

Another memorable day was February 19, 1949, when a blizzard in Wyoming shut down the Union Pacific. Many UP trains were detoured over the Rio Grande, and I recall seeing 14 or 15 trains in the area around the Big 10 and Little 10 curves before noon that day. One UP crew on an eastbound had orders to meet a westbound at Leyden, but while passing through the siding at Clay, they could see the opposing train coming only a short distance away as the crow flies but some miles away on the twisting track. Not being familiar with the railroad, and nervous after the run through the mountains that was so different from their usual Wyoming terrain, the UP crew refused to pass the east switch at Clay. Photographers Dick Kindig, Otto Perry, and I think also Bob LeMassena were in the area that morning, and I believe it was



Rio Grande 2-8-8-2s are between the Little 10 and Big 10 curves as they lift a freight up the Front Range in 1940. Helper 3401 will cut off at the Moffat Tunnel, leaving 3607 to continue west.

R. H. Kindig

Dick who walked up to the engine and convinced the crew it was OK to proceed.

Often, if gas money was short, I would go out to Utah Junction or Burnham Yard and solicit an invitation to ride a helper west to the Moffat Tunnel or Palmer Lake on the Joint Line south. Most of the crews enjoyed having someone along to brag to and educate. The run up the Front Range was an experience to remember. Crossing Coal Creek Canyon, the crew brought out large balls of waste to be soaked in water and used as gas masks in the 29 tunnels ahead. At the Moffat Tunnel, the helper would keep shoving right up to the east portal, where the rear brakeman would pull the pin and the helper would drop off. It would drift back down and turn on a wye and run to Toland for orders. On a couple of occasions I dropped off to spend the night at Toland and do a bit of trout fishing in the beaver ponds across from the station.

On one of these occasions I caught a 3400-series 2-8-8-2 helper for the ride back to Denver. It was a beautiful day, and I was enjoying the scenery from the brakeman's doghouse on the tender. Suddenly as we approached Rollinsville we began to work steam, unusual on a 2 percent *descending* grade. We chugged, literally, to a stop and the crew climbed off, so I got down to see what was going on. The engineer said, "We've got no brakes."

Further examination revealed the large pin connecting the front engine to the rear one had somehow worked out, and when it fell it cut an air line, bleeding the entire brake system. The engineer walked to a nearby phone box to call the dispatcher while the fireman and I stood near the front of the locomotive. It was being restrained on the hill by a slightly cracked throttle. Suddenly this restraint overcame the force of gravity and the locomotive began to move uphill in reverse. We both ran like crazy, caught it before it

could get away, and got it stopped.

The dispatcher said nothing was coming out of Denver, and the engineer agreed to try and bring us in without brakes — down 39 miles of 2 percent grade. He was going to control the speed by putting the locomotive in reverse and working steam, but he did tell us to bail out if we got moving over about 20 mph. We made it with no trouble, but it was weird to hear the engine exhaust, particularly in the tunnels, as it worked under load.

Another time I rode a Santa Fe 2-10-2 to Palmer Lake, spending some time with the operator there and having lunch at a small cafe nearby that had the best pie in Colorado. For the ride home I was going to catch a northbound Rio Grande extra. At that location the northbound main was several hundred yards from the southbound. Standard practice was for trains to drape themselves over the crest of the hill and stop, make a brake test, sometimes set some retainers, then leave. I walked over to the usual spot, with the intent of getting on the engine or the caboose, whichever was closer.

This guy, with a 1700-series 4-8-4 and a fairly short consist, came up the hill like a passenger train, stopped, set and released the brakes, whistled off, and started to move. It was get on or spend the night, so I climbed into an empty gondola. I think the engineer was in a hurry to get home for dinner. We covered the 49 miles to Burnham Yard in 65 minutes, including a stop at Castle Rock to set out cars on a customer's siding. While we were doing that, the crew said I could join them in the caboose, but I was having too much fun riding the gon to change.

As time passes there are many positive changes — better cameras, lenses, film, communications, etc. — but I don't believe we old-timers can be faulted for looking back at the fun we had in the "good old days." — *Ralph E. Hallock*



# Next Issue



## Quebec Central: Canadian Pacific's Eastern Gem

Jim Shaughnessy finds a rural paradise of steam just north of Vermont in the late 1950s.

## Conrail Turns the Corner

An economist who joined Conrail in 1979 looks back at the years when the big railroad began to show signs of success.

## Action at Jackson

Louisville & Nashville F7s, Alcos, and a U25C toil on Kentucky coal trains in 1967.

## A Long Trip that Turned Out Longer

A train journey from Mexico City to Hannibal, Mo., in 1945 was an adventure for a young boy.

## Fallen Flags Remembered

Dave Ingles looks back at the Wabash, known for its fast freights and a train called the *Cannon Ball*.

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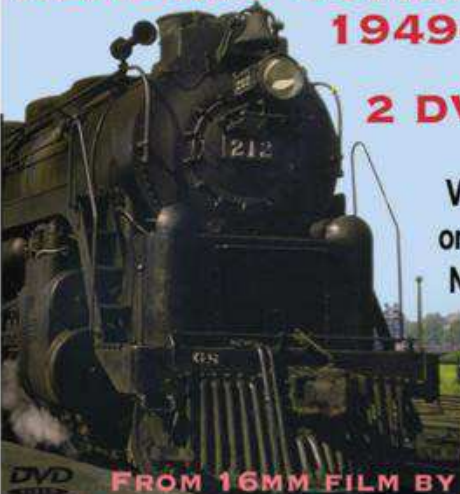
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# Interurbans to El Reno, Norman, and Guthrie

**In addition to a network of Oklahoma City** streetcar lines that survived essentially intact until 1940, the Oklahoma Railway Co. operated three interurban routes. The line to El Reno, 29 miles west of OKC, opened in 1911; Norman, 18 miles south, was reached in 1913; and the 31-mile line north to Guthrie got going in 1916. The hub of the city and interurban lines was a six-track terminal at Grand Avenue and Hudson Street in downtown Oklahoma City. As on many traction properties, ridership surged during World War II; traffic was heaviest on the Norman line, which served the University of Oklahoma and two naval bases. With only 11 interurban cars on hand in 1941, Oklahoma Railway acquired, with the Navy's assistance, second-handers from several abandoned lines. After V-J Day, the end came quickly: The streetcars and the El Reno and Guthrie lines shut down in 1946, and the Norman line quit on September 27, 1947.

In December 1945 (left), ex-Fort Wayne-Lima Railroad car 224 for Norman stands in the Oklahoma City terminal, by then down to two through tracks and used by interurbans only. The same month, city car 127 (below) rolls east on Grand Avenue; the ugly duckling on the terminal's pocket track at right is an ex-Rockford (Ill.) Public Service car.

Two photos: Barney L. Stone, Krambles-Peterson Archive





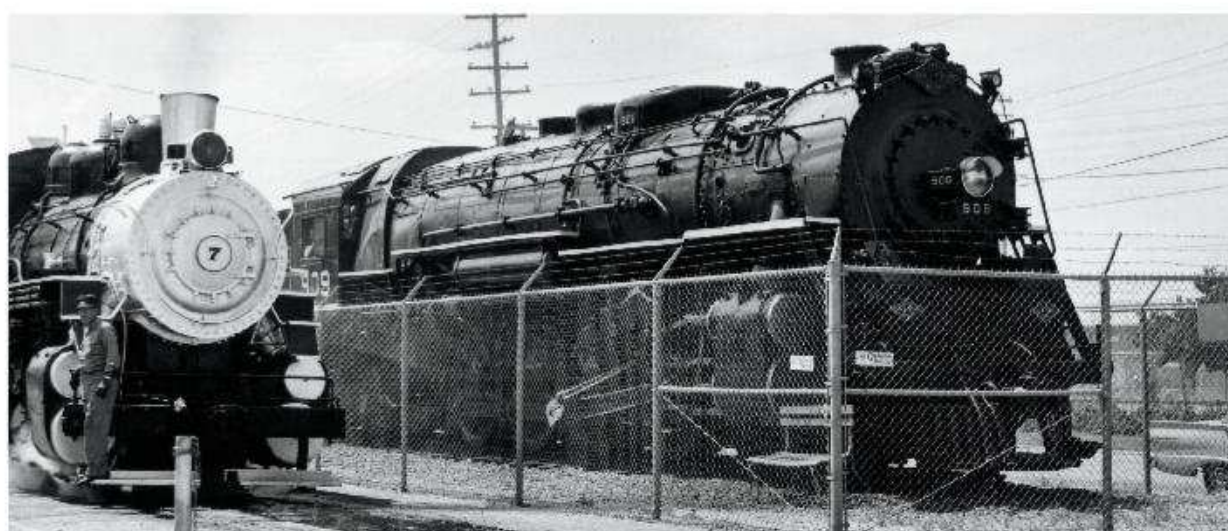
# Mohawk stars at NYC museum

Late-model 4-8-2 No. 3001 sets Indiana's National New York Central Museum apart **BY KEVIN P. KEEFE**

**Observant passengers on Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited* or *Capitol Limited*** might be startled at the sight out the south side of their train as they stop at Elkhart, Ind. There, amid other vintage railroad equipment stored beside the Norfolk Southern main line, they'll see what could almost be described as an apparition: a gleaming black New York Central steam locomotive, smartly turned out with disc drivers and a rakish pair of "elephant ear" smoke deflectors.

What they're looking at is the rarest of the rare, a late-model NYC 4-8-2 numbered 3001, the pride of Elkhart's National New York Central Museum. It's one of only two large NYC steam locomotives remaining, the other being another, older Mohawk, No. 2933, displayed at the Museum of Transportation in suburban St. Louis. As such, these two 4-8-2s are the only survivors of Central's notorious purge of big steam in the late 1950s.

The 3001 occupies center stage at the Elkhart museum, a modest but earnest institution dedicated to telling the NYC story in general and the city's role with the railroad in particular. The museum is especially successful at the latter.



**The National NYC Museum's prize is NYC 3001 (top, beside GG1 4882). As "Texas & Pacific 909," the Mohawk was exhibited for years in Texas (above, with Dallas Union Terminal 0-6-0 No. 7).**

Top, Kevin P. Keefe; above, CLASSIC TRAINS collection

If there ever was a true-blue New York Central town, it's Elkhart. The city might be better known for its status as the center for recreational vehicle manufacturing in the U.S., or its historical ties to Conn-Selmer musical instruments and Miles Laboratories drugs. But the longest-running story in Elkhart is the Water Level Route and its descendants.

Nothing symbolizes that history more than the 3001. The title "thoroughbred" was often used to describe NYC's famous 4-6-4 Hudsons, but the term also fits the

final Mohawks. The 3001 was in Central's next-to-last class of L-3a 4-8-2s, numbered 3000–3064 and built 1940–42 by Alco and Lima. Unlike the 485 Mohawks that preceded them from the 1920s — workaday machines with footboard pilots — the L-3a's were significantly modernized for dual service, boasting roller bearings, 69-inch drivers, and a Hudson-style drop-coupler pilot. In the last years of steam on NYC, the Mohawks often hauled passenger trains of the Great Steel Fleet.

The 3001 is more than just a major



part of the museum's collection, it's actually the institution's *raison d'être*. Without it, there wouldn't be a museum. How the 4-8-2 got there is a tale of serendipity cast against the Central's 1950s policy of scrapping nearly all its steam.

Like all the Hudsons and Niagaras and most of the Mohawks, the 3001 should have succumbed to the acetylene torch. However, fate strangely intervened in the form of Texas & Pacific 2-10-4 No. 638, owned by the city of Dallas and badly vandalized after it initially was displayed in 1955 at the Texas State Fairgrounds. It was later scrapped. Embarrassed over what happened to its gift, the T&P went searching for a suitable replacement and found NYC 3001 hanging on in a scrapyard in Cincinnati. The railroad bought the 4-8-2, dressed it up as "T&P 909," and gave it to the city as a replacement.

The city later gave the 4-8-2 to Dallas' new Age of Steam Museum (now called Museum of the American Railroad and located in Frisco, Texas), where it remained



The museum is hard by the ex-NYC main line, busy with Norfolk Southern traffic and four Amtrak trains, which stop at the station at far left.

Kevin P. Keefe

as a T&P stand-in. That is, until the formation of the Lake Shore Railroad Foundation in Elkhart, a group whose mission was repatriation of the 3001 to NYC territory. Negotiations ensued, and in 1984 the Foundation acquired the 3001. Today it stands near the museum's headquarters, a former NYC freight house across the tracks from the city's Amtrak station.

"We consider the Mohawk to be the most valuable item in the collection," says

the museum's director, Robin Hume. "We keep it painted and treated with rust preventative as often as we can. When you're standing near it, it can be overwhelming. You can sort of see the vastness of the New York Central, feel the history of the railroad."

Hume's comment could be seen to represent the entire mission of the museum, which is to celebrate the legacy of the Central, and in particular call attention to its huge role in the development of Elkhart.

One of the first things you see entering the museum is a long installation depicting a timeline of local railroad history, loaded with historic photos, some three-dimensional railroad items, and helpful graphics. The exhibit traces the evolution of Elkhart's relationship with the NYC from 1851, when the first train of the Northern Indiana Railroad entered town, through its later connection with the original "Old Road" of the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern and its main line from Adrian, Mich. Elkhart's relationship with the

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The museum building, a former freight house, is filled with a variety of displays (above). From the cab of the Mohawk (left), visitors can look down the running board at NYC E8 4085.

Left, Robert S. McGonigal; above, Kevin P. Keefe

Central was finally cemented in 1914 when LS&MS was absorbed into NYC.

Other exhibits also touch on Elkhart's rich rail history. For nearly a century, Elkhart was a major terminal for the NYC, with a classification yard dominated by an engine terminal complete with multi-track coal wharf and two roundhouses. The place gained more prominence in 1958, when President Al Perlman's NYC opened Robert R. Young Yard, named for the colorful financier who put Perlman in charge. The new yard came at the height of Perlman's consolidation of NYC facilities and featured a computer-assisted hump and retarder operation. The yard continued to evolve under Conrail ownership in the 1980s and '90s and remains a strategic facility for Norfolk Southern.

Elsewhere in the Main Hall, other exhibits tell the Elkhart story. One pays tribute to the building's former use as a freight house. Another depicts a fully equipped ticket agent's office, complete with a mannequin agent working at an expansive desk, the walls adorned with authentic station signage along with the original William Harnden Foster painting *As the Centuries Pass in the Night*. Elsewhere another immersive exhibit describes the work of track gangs, complete with a collection of tools. There's also an impressive collection of scale models of NYC locomotives and rolling stock.

Families with children — not to mention O-gauge fans — will appreciate the multi-level three-rail layout that occupies a large space in the rear of the building. The layout fancifully depicts NYC in all

its glory, steam and diesel, and usually has multiple trains running.

Outdoors, there is more to see, some of which is problematic. The museum boasts another NYC prize, E8 4085, which led the last eastbound *20th Century Limited* out of Chicago on December 2, 1967. The 1953 EMD's original lightning-stripe paint scheme is well maintained and visitors can view the two prime movers through a Plexiglas display window.

Elsewhere, visitors will find other genuine NYC items: a 1910 wooden caboose, with its characteristically squat cupola; a pair of NYC "big hook" cranes, formerly based at Harmon and Selkirk, N.Y.; a 1963 bay-window caboose; and a number of other examples of NYC freight cars and work equipment.

However, some of the other pieces in the collection would be charitably called motley, in view of the museum's name. Former Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 4882, given Penn Central markings after arrival at the museum, is in serious need of cosmetic restoration. Passenger equipment hails from such disparate sources as New Haven, Illinois Central, and Rock Island. In the case of the latter, a streamlined observation car painted for NYC actually was the Rock's *Minnesota*.

## A LOCAL ENDEAVOR

Given the history of the NYC and its rival Pennsylvania, it might be tempting to compare Elkhart's modest museum with its counterpart, the far larger Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg. But that would be unfair. The PRR

museum is state-owned and -operated, and thus has access to far deeper funding, not to mention its origins in PRR's splendid collection of historical locomotives. In Elkhart, the NYC museum is simply one of several city departments that, every year, must fight for its share of the municipal budget, a challenge in a struggling Midwest industrial city.

Protecting and promoting the museum's interests is the job of director Hume. She's an Elkhart native who lived for years in Washington, D.C., and Portland, Ore., while pursuing a career in teaching and nursing administration. She came back to be closer to family and went to work for the city. "The mayor asked me to consider this job, knowing of my interest in Elkhart and my administrative abilities," she says.

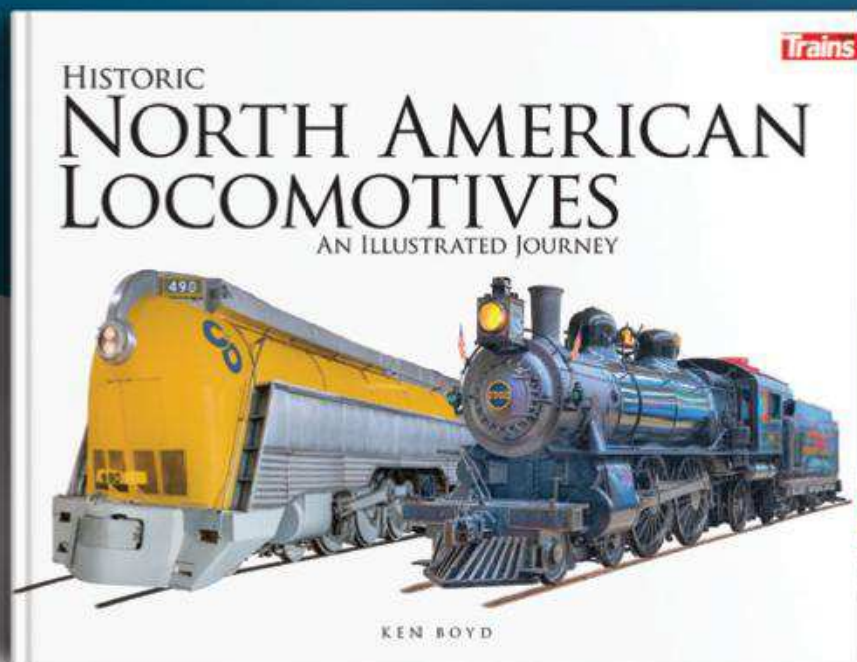
Hume manages a small daily staff at the museum, and also relies on the assistance of a dedicated group of volunteers. One of her "key guys," she says, is Dave Overton, retired now after a long career as a local newspaper reporter. Overton has been involved from the very beginning, when he was active in the Foundation and its effort to bring 3001 to Elkhart.

The NYC museum is definitely worth a visit, for the 3001 alone. The rest of the exhibits and the rolling-stock collection could be considered icing on the cake. Plus you'll learn a lot about the enduring relationship between a railroad and a city. And there's always that additional compensation: 100-plus NS and Amtrak trains a day, rumbling past the museum's entrance on Main Street. **■**



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# Ontario branchline terminal

**"A really wonderful sight."** That's how photographer Don Wood described this scene at Canadian National's Owen Sound, Ontario, depot at 11:35 p.m. on July 23, 1957. Pacific 5588 simmers at the head of train 175, which it has just brought in from Guelph, 115 miles to the south via Palmerston. Situated at the base of the peninsula that separates Lake Huron from Georgian Bay, Owen Sound was served by CN and CP branch lines. The CN station, standing barely 100 feet from the waterfront, was

built in 1932 to replace an 1894 structure; its last scheduled passenger train departed in 1970, and Owen Sound lost both of its rail lines in the 1990s as part of CN and CP's complete retreat from the area. Happily, the CN station survives as the Owen Sound Marine & Rail Museum, with a CN coach and caboose on tracks out front (the CP depot still stands as well), and engine 5588 has long been on display at Windsor, Ont. But the "wonderful sight" that Don Wood captured will never be repeated. ■